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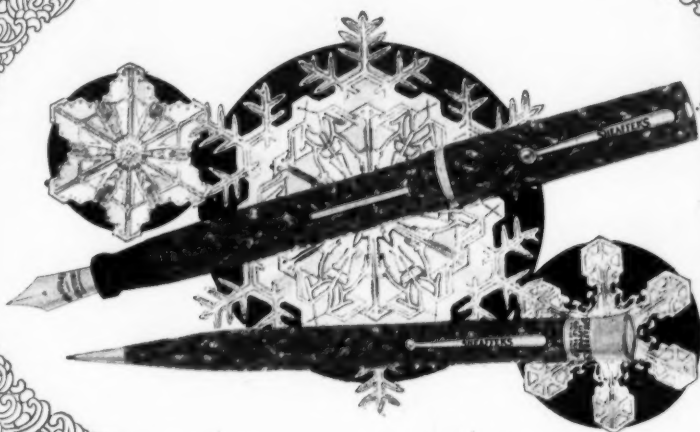
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Vol. LVIII
No. 4

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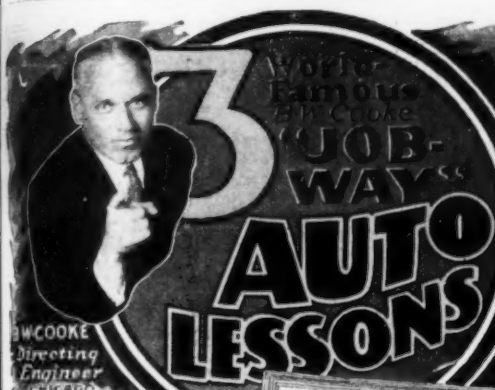
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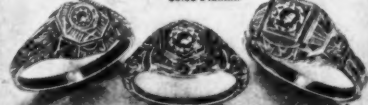
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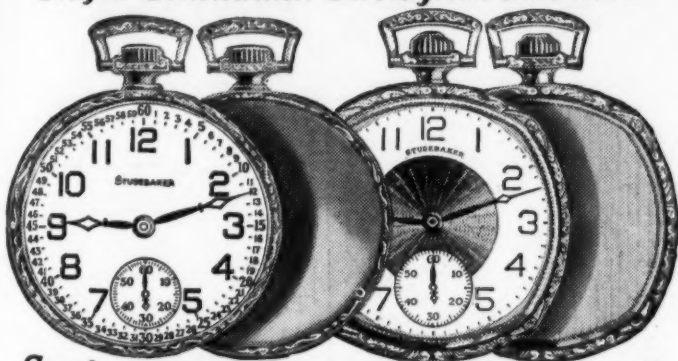
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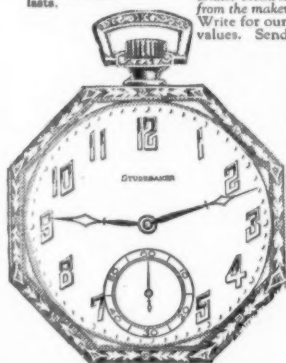
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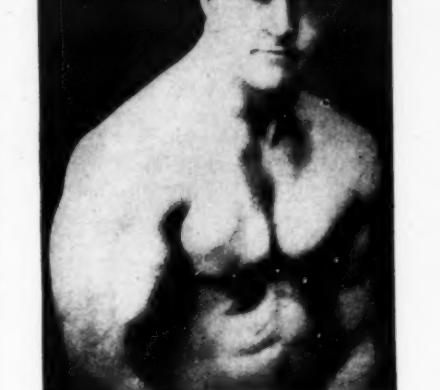
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Can you squat down and sit on your heels without hearing a crack in your knees or a stiffness around the joints? Can you bend over slowly without bending your knees and place the open palms on the ground alongside of your feet? Can you place your hands on the wall behind you and gradually let yourself down backwards till your hands touch the ground? If not, your joints are rusty, your tendons are too tight—you need more bone-oil.

WHAT IS BONE-OIL?

When you were born, nature gave you a lubricating fluid in and around the socket of every joint. This lubricating fluid continued in an abundant supply as long as you kept active. But when you ceased to exercise, this fluid lessened and the tendons atrophied, which attached the muscles to your bones. You dried up and stiffened. You became rusty.

When machinery becomes rusty we get the oil can. But you can't squirt Bone-Oil into your joints. What then can you do?

COME TO MY REPAIR SHOP

As a regular machinist I'm a first-class dub—but when it comes to human frame-work, I'm yet to find the one I can't whip into shape. Yes, I know they call me the Muscle Builder, and I'm proud of the fact that my system will build more muscle in a shorter length of time than hitherto has ever been accomplished. I'm the man who guarantees to add one full inch to your arms and two inches to your chest in the first 30 days. Before I'm through, however, I'll at least triple that. Some men have added as much as 8 inches to their chests. In every case I build up the back and literally cover the abdomen with a ripple of real healthy muscle. I clear the brain and brighten the eye. I add pep and virility to the whole system. But the finest thing about my system is the type of muscle it creates. My pupils are not only enabled to perform remarkable feats of strength, but, with it all, they have the suppleness and grace of an aesthetic dancer. I have studied the entire human structure and work around the very joints and cartilages as well. That is why I am not guaranteeing you not only a strong, sturdy, robust body, a virile muscular body, but actually guarantee to lubricate your joints as well. I guarantee Bone-Oil. Now, beat that if you can. And notice I'm not making any idle promises. I guarantee these things. Come on, then, let those stiff-kneed, wobbly, half-animated bodies be a thing of the past. Tomorrow you start on the straight and rapid road to real manhood. You take no chances with me. It's a sure bet, so why hesitate? Snap into it. Let's go.

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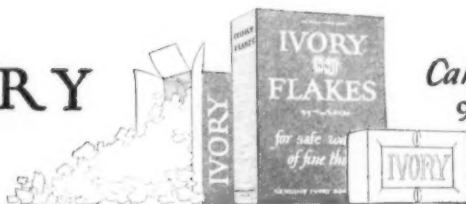


"Which is the *safest* soap for delicate garments?" Salespeople in the country's leading stores recently were asked this question.

An overwhelming majority replied, "Ivory Soap." In New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston,—wherever the question was asked,—Ivory was recommended far oftener than any other soap. The reason, of course, is clear. Ivory is pure. It is safe for anything that water alone cannot harm.

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AINSLEE'S

VOL. LVIII

DECEMBER, 1926.

No. 4

By Frank Harris

Author of

*The Great
Game*



An English Saint

MR. LAWRENCE had brought tailoring to an art: he had reconciled contradictions; his clothes fitted the individual, yet preserved a distinctive class-fashion and dignity. His own manners were of similar elegance: he met every one politely from whom he had anything to gain, and yet by subtle gradations of deference proclaimed differences of position. In excellent harmony with his surroundings, he had made money easily and saved a considerable sum; he had no vices so-called, save vanity, and had placed all his hopes in his only son Gerald. He had got Gerald into Harrow, had hoped for years to make an officer of him; the boy's handsome face and figure he thought would be best set off by a gold-laced uniform and a mess jacket. But a certain delicacy of con-

stitution, which appeared to have grown with the lad's growth, defeated his hope, and nothing was left for Gerald, in his father's opinion, but the church; to be a gentleman was the goal of Mr. Lawrence's ambition. He was ashamed of the shop—"a cut above it" he felt—and would have sought another career for himself had he had the necessary education. He was determined that his son should enjoy all possible advantages of teaching and training.

At first Gerald did not seem to profit by his opportunities. He learned with difficulty, his memory was weak, and his mind flaccid. His father consoled himself with the fact that the boy was growing too fast. "There's no hurry for a year or two," he used to say to himself. So he kept his son at home in his large villa on Putney Hill, and fed him up as

a preparation for Oxford. The youth took all that was done for him as a matter of course. He was content to go to Oxford, which seemed to him more aristocratic than Cambridge. He had been taught by bitter experience at the preparatory school that the shop in Bond Street was something to be put behind one and forgotten; and at Harrow his pallor and frailty, something wistful and unearthly in his large eyes, had won sympathy and blunted the malice of boyish curiosity. Gerald had inherited his father's qualities of docility and good humor; but his father's tough resolution to get rich and get on was transmuted in him into a desire to please rather than to rise. His extraordinary beauty made this ambition appear amiable. Gerald was tall and slight, and his face had the refined regularity of an ascetic Hermes. His father, while proud of his own good features and silver hair, had always regretted a tendency to stoutness and high color, and his boy's slim figure and pallor appealed to him intensely. "It gives him an air," he said to himself.

Gerald had a good deal of difficulty in getting into Lincoln. His father preferred that college to any other: the name had a stately quietude about it which pleased him, and everybody knew that the master was a famous scholar, whose mere approval conferred dignity. But though the entrance examination is not supposed to be difficult, it proved almost insurmountable to Gerald. Still, thanks to the clever coaching of an eminent, but poor, scholar, who consented to stay at Putney with them for six months, the difficulty was at length overcome, and Gerald entered Lincoln.

The rooms allotted to him there had formerly been inhabited by a sporting nobleman whose tastes wavered between the photos of Gaiety chorus girls and colored prints of renowned pugilists. Gerald had to take over the furniture, and, with his usual acquiescence, he oc-

cupied the rooms without disturbing either the rosy biceps of Tom Belcher and Jim Mace or the black legs of the reigning beauties.

Gerald settled down in Oxford easily and quickly. He rather liked rules, and kept them without difficulty; he was never late even for morning chapel. His distinguished appearance and ingratiating manners won him numbers of acquaintances; every one wanted to know him, and before his first term was at an end he was friendly with nine men out of ten in the college, and on good terms with half the varsity. Yet there were a few bitter drops in his cup. Young Lord Woodstock had shown himself very friendly for a little while and then drawn away coldly. Luke Rattison, too, the master, had made much of him at first; asked him to lunch and dinner and then left him severely alone. "An amiable idiot" was the bitter-tongued judge's harsh verdict. On the whole, Gerald's first term at Lincoln was rather a success in spite of Lord Woodstock's defection and the master's disdain.

When he returned home his father was delighted with him; told him he had let it be known in business circles that he wanted to sell the shop, adding that when he got the price he wanted for it the boy should have the income of a bishop to spend as he liked. Gerald was suitably grateful, though he scarcely realized the abyss that lies between poverty and riches. He had always had what he wanted, and his desires had never been sharpened by denial.

Watching him closely his father noticed that his son had taken a liking to fancy waistcoats and colored ties; he wondered if the boy had fallen in love; and, to tell the truth, there was a barmaid at a village inn on the river above Oxford who had half captivated the youth's fancy. But luckily, or unluckily, Gerald was destined to fall into more skillful hands. Early in his second term he met some one who stopped his drift-

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ing and brought him to new bearings. He had been walking along the towing path, watching the boats on the river, when he was hailed by Lord Woodstock. He went across to him eagerly—Gerald seldom bore malice—and was presented to a Mrs. Leighton.

"I want you to take Mrs. Leighton home," said Lord Woodstock. "It's going to rain, I'm sure, and you've an umbrella. I am due to go out in the 'night.'"

Gerald Lawrence bowed, accepting the trust. He had a sort of vision of a lady about middle height, with steady brown eyes, and a smile that caught his breath. Mrs. Leighton lived about half a mile on the other side of Oxford, and on their way through the High he realized that she seemed to know a good deal about him, though he did not understand that most of her conversation was directed to the increasing of her knowledge. The truth is Mrs. Leighton had been struck with the extraordinary beauty of his face, and had managed to get Lord Woodstock to introduce her without arousing that sharp young gentleman's suspicions.

Mrs. Leighton usually succeeded in whatever she undertook. She was a woman of thirty odd who admitted to twenty-seven or twenty-eight. She had been married very young to an Indian judge some twenty years her senior. He had caught dysentery and died, and had left his widow very well provided for. A house and some three acres of ground on the outskirts of Oxford formed part of his legacy to her. Mrs. Leighton had settled down at Oxford, meaning to occupy her leisure with flirtations if she could get nothing more serious. She had already had two or three little affairs; the one with Woodstock had left a smart of disappointment. She had begun to realize that the extreme youth which appealed to her so intensely had corresponding drawbacks and shortcomings. The fever

of it ran high, but it was all embarrassing idealism, adoration even, and mad, unreasoning jealousy, or else it had no enduring continuance. Besides, Mrs. Leighton was intelligent and loved power even more than pleasure; she desired above everything to play a part in life. The sight of Gerald Lawrence made her catch her breath with admiration; she realized with a thrill that she had never imagined any one so handsome or with such distinction. Struck with his expression, she had asked Lord Woodstock: "Who is the priest?" and had added something about not caring for willowy men to allay possible jealousy. But now on her way home she realized with a certain apprehension that Gerald's mere appearance had moved her. The frail pallor of his face stirred her pity, and the great eyes set her throbbing. "Violet eyes," she said to herself; "who would have guessed that eyes could thrill?"

From that day on life assumed a new purpose for Gerald Lawrence. On parting Mrs. Leighton had said to him, "I hope you will come and see me soon." He replied that he'd be happy; but that was not enough for her.

"When, then?" she rejoined, laughing. "You know we women like to prepare a little; we hate to be taken unawares. Come to lunch—what day?"

Gerald hesitated; should he say to-morrow? Instead he questioned, "This week, may I?"

"Of course," she replied. "To-day is Tuesday; shall we say Friday at one thirty?"

And on the Friday he appeared. The house made an extraordinary impression on him; there seemed to him to be pictures everywhere; he had been accustomed to wealth and comfort, but not to refinement and beauty. He was astonished by the profusion of flowers and books and papers, by a sense of lettered and artistic understanding. Mrs. Leighton soon set him at ease and

drew him out to talk about himself. After lunch they went into the drawing-room to take coffee, and he informed her that he thought of going into the church. She encouraged him, and when he went on to confess how the master and Lord Woodstock had treated him, she salved his hurt vanity and made light of the implied criticism.

"The master," she said, "is a pedantic old bear, and Woodstock was jealous of your good looks."

Gerald had never enjoyed himself so much. He went away promising to come again on the following Monday. Mrs. Leighton found words for her impression: "Innocent," she said to herself, "and a little *gauche*, but"—and she thought of his eyes and fine features and white skin—"but sure to make a sensation as a curate," and she smiled comprehendingly.

In a little while the pair became familiar. Gerald used to drop in to tea and sit at Mrs. Leighton's feet. While in that position one day she flattered him outrageously, for she wanted to correct his somewhat pronounced taste for light waistcoats and gaudy ties.

"All your clothes," she said, "should be dark and quiet. You must really begin, Gerald, to see how fine your face is. If you were a woman you would have known it long ago, and tried to live up to it. A woman always lives up to her face if it is pretty. That's why pretty women are so much nicer than ugly ones. With your face a woman would be simply angelic. The church is the very place for you."

"I'm glad you like me," he replied, shyly taking her hand. She drew him to her a little and gave him her lips.

"You must have seen I like you, Gerald," she said.

"And I like you," he replied, vaguely aware of the challenge; "who could help liking you? It is more than liking." But he omitted to prove his words.

Vaguely disappointed, she went on

flattering him. "Through vanity to the heart" was her unconscious thought.

As they stood together one day at the door of the drawing-room, she said:

"I don't like to let you go, Gerald," and as he bent down to her she slipped her arms round his neck.

"You never kiss me," she said in a childish whisper, pouting.

He kissed her. "You know I will if you like," he answered.

"If I like!" she repeated, chilled and hurt. "Don't you want to?"

"Of course I do," was the reply; but the kissing seemed rather to embarrass him.

She laughed aloud to change the current of feeling, and accompanied him to the door. But she had learned her lesson.

"He's not like a young man," she said to herself. "He's merely decorative," she added a little bitterly. But Gerald meant much to her, and in spite of herself she took a lively and continuous interest in him. She was ambitious for him, and gave point and meaning to his vague aspirations by playing on his vanity.

"You will have a great success in the pulpit," she said to him once; "you must be a prince of the church." The mere words flushed him with pleasure.

"I shouldn't know what to say," he objected.

"That will come," she insisted; "you must read the right books and get into the spirit of the thing," and there and then made up her mind to advise and encourage him. He was very docile, very amenable to such silken guidance.

In subtler ways, too, she managed to mold and develop him. With a little trouble she got herself invited by the master's wife, and chaperoned by that emphatic lady, took afternoon tea once in Gerald's rooms. The results of the visit were far-reaching. She was even more horrified by the prints of pugilists than by the photographs of the actresses.

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She soon induced Gerald to get rid of them all, to pack them all away with the fancy waistcoats and flaming ties.

Before long she had persuaded him to buy a French *prie-dieu* of the fourteenth century and a Byzantine crucifix of the sixth with an angular figure on it in ivory of an astonishingly emaciated Christ. It was Mrs. Leighton who taught Gerald the æsthetic value of austerity; she stripped his rooms of ornament and even of comfort till their bareness began to affect him. All the while she was assiduous to encourage in him the vanity of his personal distinction.

"I love your honey-colored hair," she said to him one day, "but I wish it were silver. It would suit you so much better. You will be adorable at fifty. You must let it grow longer, Gerald, not too long, but long enough to be singular. Singularity is the next best thing to beauty."

"Do you really think me good-looking?" he asked nervously, eager for more sweet.

"Good-looking," she replied gravely, "isn't the word. If you ever are as good as your looks, you'll convert the world. You have only to live up to your face, Gerald, and women will go on their knees to you."

One evening at dinner Gerald had rather a trying time which gave her a great opportunity. Luke Rattison was the host, and he seemed to take an unholy delight in asking Gerald questions and forcing him to display his mental poverty. Again and again Gerald fell into the trap; again and again Mrs. Leighton sailed in to the rescue gallantly; she was thankful when dinner was over, though she held her own to the end.

"To be as clever as you," she said to her host when rising, "is really a sort of disease;" and to Mrs. Rattison, in the drawing-room, she remarked: "All high art consists in concealing art, they

say; I suppose learning's different." Mrs. Leighton believed in revenging herself on her enemy.

But afterward she took Gerald seriously to task.

"Why talk?" she said. "Why let yourself be made a fool of?"

"What was I to do?" asked Gerald. "I had to try to answer his stupid questions."

"No, no, you hadn't," she said quickly. "Why not have smiled at him in an abstracted kind of way and refused to be drawn out? The less you say the better," she added out of her disappointment. "No one can know what's in you if you don't talk. It's a great deal easier to look wise than to talk wisely. Besides, my dear Gerald, it is your rôle to say nothing. When you have beauty to speak for you, why talk? Silence alone is magnetic."

The dinner had frightened her thoroughly and she set herself at once to strengthen her protégé's weak points. She read the gospels with him, and made him learn some of the great phrases by heart, and begged him to use them in and out of season.

"You have no idea how effective they are," she said; "they never seem out of place in a man who is going to be a clergyman, and they always call up childish associations in all of us and high emotions. We all thrill to them."

"How clever you are, Amy," he sighed. "If only I had half your brains!"

She pouted and shrugged her shoulders; she was beginning to think that less than half would profit him, but out of loyalty to her affection she put the thought away.

All this while Gerald was not merely passive. Very early in their acquaintance he realized that Mrs. Leighton's advice was excellent. He noticed that since he had taken to dress as she wished, every one showed greater eagerness to know him, every one made up to

him. A little while after his rooms were swept and garnished, a senior student of Christ Church, who had visited him, declared that there was no man in the college so interesting, no rooms so characteristic. A little later, too, Gerald conquered the flippant unconcern of Lord Woodstock, who came up to his rooms by chance and was astonished beyond measure at the change in them. He fell in love with the Welsh dresser and the old oak refectory table; but the *prie-dieu* and the great Byzantine cross pleased him still more. Gerald explained the change cleverly. "You see, I took over Lord S——'s rooms, and I didn't like to alter them at once; it would have looked——" And he stopped.

"Some of the fellows call you the 'Saint,'" Woodstock exclaimed, "and I half believe you deserve it. You don't go on the river now, do you?"

"No," said Gerald, recalling at once Mrs. Leighton's advice, and adding in an undertone as if to himself something about "my master's business," and then flushed with doubt of his own daring.

The quotation and flush were not lost on Lord Woodstock. He instantly became serious.

"You must not mind my chaff, old fellow. At the very first, you know, I took to you, and first thoughts are always best, I'm beginning to believe. You must not take my ragging seriously. I chaff a bit, but there's no harm in me, at least so the dear old mater says."

Gerald just nodded, smiling a little. He was wise enough not to say anything more, and Lord Woodstock went away genuinely impressed.

Gerald began to see that an undreamed-of success was possible to him, and his vanity was on fire to realize it. Mrs. Leighton had put a new spirit into him; set an ideal before him which he felt he might reach, and which brought him honor and satisfaction at every step. He began resolutely to try to model him-

self on her favorite St. Francis, and very soon his progress became astonishing. He had learned to smoke, as most young men do, but he had never cared for it very much. The truth was, any little excess of any sort shook his weakness at once; an extra cigar or an hour or so spent in a smoke-laden atmosphere made him dizzy and unwell. Mrs. Leighton advised him to drop it. "Saints shouldn't smoke," she said; and he gave up the practice and felt better for it. Renunciation is a pleasure to the weak. One day at lunch, too, with Mrs. Leighton, he noticed that the coffee and liqueur had flushed his face. He asked her whether she had remarked it.

"Since you ask me, Gerald," she confessed, "I must say I have, and I don't like it in you. It does not matter much," she went on smilingly, "but you ought not to care for any worldly pleasures; you ought not to look hot and healthy. If you were robust or strong you would lose half your distinctive character. You appeal to the pity in one, and pity is the most direct approach to the heart. You should be very pale and hold yourself aloof. Your face is saintly; you must really resolve to grow worthy of it."

He was willing enough to accept the hint; he left off using coffee and liqueurs and a little later began to deny himself meat as well; his vanity ruled him, and whatever increased the spiritual beauty of his face was easy to him. Mrs. Leighton helped him dexterously; she gradually elaborated a rule of conduct, founded on abstemiousness, with the sole object of etherealizing his expression, and her advice did not stop at externals.

"If people talk commonplaces to you, don't answer them," she counseled. "Take no part in worldly conversation. The heavenly world is your kingdom."

On this road they made discovery on discovery, though Mrs. Leighton was nearly always the quicker to draw the

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true lesson from every incident. A lady of great position had been talking to Gerald in Mrs. Leighton's drawing-room. She had been completely won, partly by his appearance, partly by the thoughtful reticence of his attitude; she was just asking him to come down to C— to dine and stay the night when he rose smiling, shook his head, and moved away.

Lady L—— did not know whether to be angry or not, but when she saw that Gerald had not left her for any one else, but was simply staring out of the window, she decided that the rebuff was due to some mistake of her own, or some unimagined greatness in him, and accordingly she made it her business to tell Mrs. Leighton how much she admired him, and to beg her to intercede so that the "Saint" might honor her with a visit.

"I'm afraid," Mrs. Leighton answered, "that Mr. Lawrence will not go; he hates visiting." But she hastened to add, "He always says he should like to live in a desert, for the spirit has need of solitude."

The great lady was even more impressed; and afterward Mrs. Leighton told Gerald of the astonishing success of his rudeness and what she had said in excuse.

"Never be afraid of being rude," she said. "Women know their own unworth, and admire every one who treats them with disdain. Don't be afraid of standing aloof. It is familiarity which cheapens. You are very tall: make every one look up to you, dear. I told her you were like a monk of the Thebaid: your spirit had need of solitude."

Gerald's success soon began to surprise even his mentor. Some one, probably Lord Woodstock, insisted on calling him the "Saint," and the name "caught on." It became the fashion for the best men to spend half an hour nearly every day in the "Saint's" rooms

or in his company. Gerald talked less and less, but the asceticism of the rooms and the old-world furniture appealed to all the finer spirits much in the same way as his own personal distinction and reserve appealed to them. He was learning wisdom, too, and when a man once asked him his opinion on some knotty point, he answered:

"I have no opinions." The phrase met with such success that it made him think about it and set him on to find out and elaborate the hidden significance of it.

"I have no opinions," he said a little later; "I have only feelings, and to transplant feelings into words is to make them common, deprive them of color."

His mind grew under the discipline; every step upward widened his horizon, forced him to further thought. The books he read helped him, too, as they help weak minds. He read the gospels over and over again, steeped himself in them, and in the "Imitation." He learned by heart hymns of Herbert, Keble and Faber. The very fact that his mind had no furniture of its own left the chambers of it empty and prepared for the Christian equipment. His weakness of constitution made meekness and gentleness very easy to him. Every assertion of what one might call his femininity of nature pleased him and delighted his friends. Once a man was a little rude to him.

"Forgive me," said Gerald, "I must have offended you unconsciously; I'm sorry." The man stammered apologies, and afterward took pains to be deferential.

The habit of silence, too, which Gerald cultivated, and which had grown on him, brought its own reward. He began to notice very soon that what other people said and did made a much deeper impression on him when he was merely listening. His own reticence enabled him to understand other people better, to comprehend them more clearly, and

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as they felt no self-assertion in him, their own egotism expanded in his company, and he got to know them astonishingly well. He was observant, if not farseeing.

Every step forward in the new path brought him encouragement and honor. His sayings began to be repeated in the college. No one ever knew who first attributed wisdom to him, but the attribution was successful. Young men in particular were inclined to accord both virtue and power to a man of such extraordinary personal distinction, and still more extraordinary reserve. Excusing himself once for having "sporting his oak," Gerald flowered into the phrase learned unconsciously from Mrs. Leighton, "The soul grows in solitude." The word spread through Oxford as perfume spreads through a room. Gerald was continually profiting by the fact that he was in intimate harmony with his surroundings.

A sort of legend began to form itself about him in his own college. The master's wife, of course, knew many undergraduates, and the Gerald legend soon came to her ears. Her little mind had been made up about him, and for some time she did not trouble her husband with the ridiculous rumors. But when the elder fellows and students began to talk in the same way her feminine curiosity was excited, and she spoke to the master.

"I want to invite that Gerald Lawrence to our garden party," she said. "You know they call him the 'Saint' now, and some even say he's clever."

"What!" exclaimed her husband. "That nullity! It's impossible. There are many undergraduates who have microscopically small minds, but that man has no mind at all—a magnificent head and nothing in it. He forces me to believe there is truth in the German saying:

"Grosse Stirn
Wenig Gehirn."

"Every one can't be mistaken," replied his wife tartly, "and Lawrence has hundreds of admirers. Let's ask him to our garden party, but without that woman, that Mrs. Leighton—she's a cat."

The master was indifferent.

"As you like," he said; "one more or less in the garden makes no difference; but Lawrence is a round nought, and never will be anything more."

The invitation surprised Gerald a little, and luckily for him he took it to Mrs. Leighton. When she read it she clapped her hands.

"A proof of your success, Gerald," she cried, "a double proof. She asks you and she doesn't ask me. I stuck up for you last time; she therefore revenges herself by not asking me. Yet she is compelled by your reputation to ask you. She has not done it willingly. You must refuse, but how? Can't we think of something that will whet her curiosity? Let's compose a letter together. But first of all let's have lunch: thoughts only come to me with the coffee."

"Eating drives my thoughts away," said Gerald meditatively.

After lunch Mrs. Leighton rose to the occasion.

"Dear Mrs. Rattison," she began, "I dare not accept your kind invitation—the truth," she said to herself as she wrote, "the truth's always original. Now how can I tell her the faults of her own house?" she mused, and scrawled two or three lines hastily, then ran her pen through what she had written. "No; that won't do," she said, "won't do at all. It's rude and not witty. Ah! I've got it. I'll blot all that out. This is the letter, Gerald." And she read aloud:

"DEAR MRS. RATTISON: I dare not accept your invitation. Your garden is charming; but I'm a little frightened of gardeners. They divide all creation into flowers and weeds, and I'm only a weed. You will forgive me, won't

you? And let me come and drink tea with you some afternoon?

"Yours in all service,

"GERALD LAWRENCE."

"That last sentence is a masterpiece," cried Mrs. Leighton, "for it divides them and gets the woman on your side. She'll begin to admit her husband's faults and take your side against him, and that new ending's good. It's only a woman who could write like that," and she sighed.

"I think it very clever of you, Amy," said Gerald while stooping over her to sign. As he drew himself up again he put his left hand on her shoulder, and, being pleased with her success and his praise, she looked up at him. The invitation in her regard affected him: he bent and kissed her forehead. She drew his lips down to hers. When he stood up again she felt he was a little rigid and aloof.

"He has no passion in him," she said to herself afterward, "not a spark, yet he tempts one. Why?"

She consoled herself very easily. It was a distinction now to be seen with Gerald Lawrence. Every one stared at them when they passed in the street. She could read envy in the sneers of the older women, and admiration in the girls' eyes. Every one remarked him. "It's like going about with a great personage," she said to herself. Moreover, his beauty always kept its fascination for her. "They say beauty's only skin deep," she used to say, "but ugliness goes to the bone."

Gerald's letter had a success. Mrs. Rattison brought it to the master, who pursed his lips over it.

"H'm, h'm! Rather rude."

"It's very clever," said Mrs. Rattison. "I wonder if he wrote it himself or whether that cat helped him." She determined to leave the letter unanswered.

But the rising tide of Gerald's reputation forced her hand. Mrs. Rattison resolved not to fail again; she wrote in-

viting Gerald to dinner, and giving him a couple of weeks' notice; she assured him, with a touch of irony, that he should be treated like a flower. At the same time she wrote to Mrs. Leighton asking her as well.

This move brought about a long talk between the two confederates.

"If you feel strong enough," said Mrs. Leighton, "we'll accept, but this time you must make no mistake. If the master tries to draw you out, profess ignorance; if he dares to poke fun at you, smile at him kindly and don't answer him; forgive him—that's it!" she exclaimed. "Forgive him, and so bring him into your domain; don't go into his on any account."

The words came from her heart, and Gerald at once felt their force and had a presentiment of their efficacy. He knew that he had grown wiser since he had last dined at Mrs. Rattison's and he determined now to bring the master into his domain if possible.

The dinner was a memorable one, epoch-making indeed in Gerald's spiritual life. One or two of the fellows were very deferential to him, and tried to draw him out. Mrs. Rattison spoke of him as the "Saint" to his face; he only smiled, shaking his head in gentle deprecation.

This byplay passed unnoticed by the master. He talked on in his usual way, picking up one topic after another and making each in turn his own, with a certain robust common sense buttressed by an extraordinary reading. Gerald scarcely spoke at all, and because the master talked too much, Gerald became a sort of second center of gravity, radiating a higher influence.

Toward the end of the dinner the master got on one of his favorite topics, the Roman church and its influence.

"Its discipline and elaborate hierarchy," he said, "afford proof positive of the furious opposition which the Christian doctrine encountered. The

church has the organization of an army; it's an instrument forged in ten thousand conflicts, a tremendous weapon: the pope is merely general in chief."

At the first pause in the little lecture, one of the fellows who had heard a great deal of such talk turned to Gerald:

"What do you think, Lawrence? Do you agree with the master?"

"I know nothing about it," said Gerald, "but I listen with delight."

"It is a plain proposition," said the master pompously, "and incontrovertible, I think. Christianity owes its success to the militant organization of the Roman church; without that it must have perished."

Every face was turned to Gerald, every one expected of him some new word, or rather every one felt that the time had come for him to give expression to their inarticulate disagreement with the master's shallow and pretentious dogmatism. Suddenly Gerald, thinking of St. Francis, found the word expected of him; his long habit of silence allowed him time to prepare it.

"I distrust organizations," he began; "the spirit's more than the body."

He paused. "'Forgive them for they know not what they do' has not yet been organized, or there would be no prisons," he added.

The master stared; his natural acuteness, his memory of great thoughts, just enabled him to see that what Gerald said was true, and he admitted to himself reluctantly, "A new truth."

"That view," he retorted gruffly, "is the view a saint would take. I hear they call you a 'Saint,'" he barked at Gerald not unkindly.

Gerald looked at him completely at a loss. The master's acquiescence had confounded him, but his usual habit of mind came to his aid:

"I'm sorry," he said, "so sorry," looking full at his tormentor as he spoke. The unexpected submission was the

coup-de-grâce; every one felt that Gerald had won; and with a little thrill he, too, inferred from the looks of those about him that his victory was conclusive, and he improved it during the rest of the evening by his silence and deferent courtesy. As he handed Mrs. Leighton into her brougham, she exclaimed:

"Come to see me, to-morrow: you've triumphed, dear! I'm so glad; so glad!"

From that evening Gerald began to see his way clearly. Next day Mrs. Leighton confirmed him in his opinion.

"You did not merely conquer, you wiped the floor with him," she cried. "He's a great, burly, commonplace person, and you towered above him. I do not know how you got the words!" she exclaimed. "But they were the very words needed; an inspiration. To forgive ignorance is unthinkable to Luke Rattison. I'm glad Lord Woodstock was at the dinner. What you said had a tremendous effect on him, and he has a great influence in Oxford. Till last night he doubted you. He told me so himself once, and I could not defend you or he'd have suspected there was something between us. Now he believes in you. It's strange how every one likes to go on their knees before some one else. We women wallow, but men are nearly as bad. Woodstock told me last night that you were the best influence in the university. The thing he liked Oxford best for was that he had met you."

"You think he's important?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," she replied. "He's much abler than any one imagines. He'll come to great place and power yet, and he'll not be afraid of helping you—the really able man never is afraid to back his opinion."

A little later his fellow students began to go out of their way to show their admiration for Gerald. At first they used to send him flowers, and occasion-

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ally books. Then comparative strangers took to sending him pictures, thirteenth-century saints in wood from convents in France, triptychs from Italy and South Germany. The son of the British ambassador in Russia sent him a Russian primitive of the fourteenth century, a panel picture, that might have been of the school of Cimabue. The heads of six saints were painted on a gilded background round the figure of the savior. Each head was cunningly differentiated by the artist who had yet naively put the name on one side of it, and on the other an appropriate text. The picture was a remarkable mixture of artistic power and saintly piety. The youth dispatched it to Gerald with a letter hoping that he would accept it as a token of his gratitude; he would be very proud, he said, to imagine it hanging between the two windows in Gerald's sitting room, and there Gerald placed it. But oftener the gifts were anonymous. Curiously enough, ever since the dinner, Mrs. Leighton herself had got into the habit of deferring a little to Gerald. Success impresses even the keen-sighted.

The praise and admiration which hung about Gerald did not smooth his way through the schools. He was a wretched scholar; even the childish Greek of the New Testament was difficult to him. But he was helped through by his acquaintance with the English text. The other subjects were even harder to master. The catechism, articles, and rubrics of the church were utterly beyond him. Often he could scarcely understand them, and he was never able to recall or use them. But he had grown cleverer in the knowledge of such phrases as appealed to his temperament, and the examiners were not so pedantic or so oblivious of public opinion as to plow the "Saint" for ignorance of the letter: Gerald scraped through with a "pass" degree.

Long before the end of his time at

Oxford he was asked to read lessons in this or that church, and these readings increased his reputation enormously. With his vanity went a good deal of the actor's temperament, and this induced him to seek singularity at all costs. As soon as he began to read in public he found that his voice was weak and almost toneless; he determined at once to make a merit of his failing, a distinction of his defect. Other people talked, or spoke, or ranted in the pulpit; he alone used a slow, unaccented, monotonous delivery which seemed to lend each word peculiar significance. Perhaps in any other man this custom would have palled; but there was about Gerald the magic of personality, and his pale face, lighted up by the great eyes, was so singularly beautiful that it seemed of itself to add weight and interest to the simplest words. One thing was certain—no one could deny the originality of his method of reading, or mistake his effects for those of any other man.

All Gerald's shortcomings of mind, no less than his gifts, including even his nickname the "Saint," seemed to lead him back to the old Catholic Church. He loved, as we have said, all observances and rules as a woman loves corsets, and perhaps for similar reasons; he felt grateful for their support, and was profoundly influenced by their decorative value. Almost insensibly he began to refer everything to the Early Church and early Christian practice.

St. Francis d'Assisi, as we have seen, was his special pattern, and the three vows of the saint were often in his mind. Curiously enough the first custom he took up of the medieval church had an enduring effect on his life. Inspired by Mrs. Leighton with the necessity of keeping his distinctive pallor, he had begun to practice partial fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; he soon found that such abstinence not only increased the spirituality of his expression, but also quickened his intellect in

the most unexpected way. While the body was empty he seemed to understand more clearly everything he read. His thoughts, indeed, ran quicker than the text. After an hour or so, it is true, he felt tired, and his mind began to dance about and beat time instead of moving forward. But at first, while fresh, he was conscious of a peculiar lucidity and ease of mental vision. The fact so encouraged him that he gradually changed from partial fasting to a complete fast, and contented himself on such days with an occasional cup of tea. The consequences were important. His face grew even more refined and impressive; his skin became almost transparent. The features sharpened, the eyes seemed larger as the face grew thinner. There could be no doubt that the spirituality of his appearance was intensified. His intellect, too, expanded rapidly; his reading became more and more fruitful to him. The chambers of his mind were gradually being furnished in the style of the Middle Ages, and when he was moved, his speech took on the quaint simplicity and childlike directness of medieval teachers; he began to be impregnated with the finest perfume, so to speak, of the Christian spirit.

In all his after life he regarded the habit of self-denial, which began by leaving off smoking and drinking, and culminated in regular and long fasting, as his initiation into the spiritual life. His first complete fast he always regarded as his "conversion," so to speak, to the Christian faith.

The habit of fasting was a blessing to him in many ways, but he gradually became conscious that it had one unexpected and peculiar drawback. He had never been troubled, as stronger youths are troubled, with sensuous desires which spring into being almost without cause, and make every waking hour a temptation and a plague, while breaking in on sleep even with the irresistible seduction of dreams. But fasting excited

the animal nature in Gerald; threatened life put forth all its reproductive vigor, and at first he was completely at a loss whether to fight the new foe or yield. His training in self-denial taught him to resist, and during the day he found it easy to change the current of his thoughts or sensations by long walks. But at night he was powerless. He began to suffer from insomnia. He fought the dreams by reading and by increasing his walks in the daytime, so that the tired body might fall into dreamless slumber. The long walks and sleeplessness combined reacted on his appearance and increased his attractiveness. He grew stronger, too, as he grew thinner. It was Mrs. Leighton's idea that he should go to a fancy dress ball at a house near Oxford dressed as a Franciscan. His appearance was a sort of event. The monk's dress suited him peculiarly, set off the refined spirituality of his face, so that every one was struck by it. From that night on Oxford counted him among its illustrations.

Shortly before he "went down" he received a letter offering him a vicarage in Surrey, with an income of six hundred pounds a year, as soon as he was ordained. He took the letter to Mrs. Leighton, and she soon discovered that the man in whose gift the advowson lay was a friend and political supporter of Lord Woodstock, who had left Oxford the term before. It was probable that he had instigated the offer. Gerald, however, told Mrs. Leighton that he had resolved to go to the East End of London for a couple of years, at least, before taking any cure of souls, and she approved of his intention. He therefore wrote thanking his would-be benefactor, and telling him of his purpose. The gentleman replied that he quite understood; but would, nevertheless, keep the living open for Mr. Lawrence.

In fact, just as people sent him gifts to adorn his rooms, so his path upward in life was made plain for him; every

one seemed eager to put their cloaks down to help him over the muddy places—another proof of how intensely his peculiar gifts and graces appealed to his contemporaries.

The relations between Gerald and Mrs. Leighton during the Oxford time had become very intimate without ever going beyond the limits of platonic friendship. She made up her mind very soon that he was not passionate; and she took such an interest in his success and mental growth, and had so many motherly fears for his health, that this somewhat unnatural relation managed to subsist. So long as Lord Woodstock was at Oxford and came from time to time to see her, she was fairly content, but after he had left, and Gerald had gone to the East End, Mrs. Leighton soon found life in Oxford intolerable. The absence of Gerald had revealed to her her own loneliness in an extraordinary way. In a week solitude became a sort of disease to her. She did not know what to do with herself, and could hardly find energy enough to get up and dress or order meals, the eating of which was a plague and weariness. She missed the walks and talks with Gerald, and above all she missed the some one to think of and make plans for; her life was without a purpose. She put her house in the hands of an agent to sell, and determined that when it was sold she would move to London. The house quickly found a purchaser, and she soon discovered a house in Wilton Place, near Albert Gate, that would suit her. In a few months she transferred her belongings and her own charming personality to London, where she would be near Gerald, and where, too, Woodstock would be able to come to see her from time to time. She would be much more likely, she said to herself, to meet some one who would marry her in London than in Oxford.

She nestled down cozily in Wilton Place before the decorations were fin-

ished. She simply had to have Gerald come and see her. She had written him letters every day, and heralded her first free evening in London by a long telegram telling him to come and dine with her at eight o'clock.

They had only been parted a few short months, and yet as soon as he entered the room she was conscious of a change in him—a surprising change. She felt at once that some unknown influence had come between them. Her heart contracted violently as under a painful grasp. What had happened? Could he have fallen in love? She put the thought out of her mind. It was impossible, she decided. But he had changed, he was more virile; the clasp of his hand was stronger, he moved more lightly. What can it be? *Who* can it be? she asked herself, resolved to find out.

The truth was as simple as the truth usually is. Although Gerald had learned a great deal at Oxford, when he came to London he was still hardly more than a boy. His vanity and Mrs. Leighton's teaching had given him an ideal in life; but it was London and its temptations which first discovered his individual soul. He had had success after success at Oxford, now he was brought to defeat on defeat. At first he had been stunned by London, and had immersed himself in the work and visiting of the Toynbee Settlement; but fasting and loneliness brought the sensual thoughts, thoughts which had now grown stronger and would not be subdued. When the impulses of the body threatened to conquer, he got into the habit of going to stay with his father on Putney Hill, thinking that the change might help him in the conflict. And at first it seemed to help him. But the table at Putney Hill was very generous, and his father, alarmed by his pallor and fragility, insisted on his taking wine and feeding up. The result on his hardened body accustomed to ascetic living was imme-

diate: sensual imaginings ruled him, he began to be obsessed by them; in vain he fought; the Nessus shirt clung stinging; all he could do was to betake himself to the East End again and read, visit and pray so assiduously as to leave no time for thought. In this condition temptation was irresistible.

The men at the Settlement had got up a concert, and among others the Sisters Weldon had been engaged to dance and sing. They were local celebrities, a pair of girls about twenty who had made a reputation in Hackney and the neighborhood. They were motherless orphans, very pretty and clever, and every one took an interest in them. Doris, the elder, was perhaps the prettier of the two according to the conventional standard, but Chrissie was a finer performer and a more self-willed and stronger nature. When they came out and danced before him in their short skirts, Gerald, who was on the platform and could have touched them, felt as if he must choke. The elder girl he thought pretty, very pretty even; but the younger, the dark sister, as he called her to himself, took possession of him body and soul. She danced, he saw, with infinitely more expression than her sister, and her figure was more attractive. He could not help studying it as she swayed and curtsied before him. When they stopped, and the storm of clapping subsided, Gerald turned to his neighbor with a question, but found he could not speak without betraying his emotion; his mouth was parched as with fever. He looked down and studied his card, and when he found that the sisters were to appear again he drew a long breath of relief.

He never knew what happened till they came on again and passed him going down to the footlights. This time they were both dressed like soldiers, something like Hungarian hussars, in close-fitting, dark-blue breeches, high boots and spurs, and short scarlet jackets which set off the shapely round-

ness of the younger girl's hips. Gerald felt his face flushing in spite of himself. He was a little annoyed and frightened lest others seeing her should fall in love with her, for he could not help admiring her mutinous dark face, her gay vivacity, her lovely form. Her sister merely danced, but brave little Chrissie threw abandon into her steps and a hint of passion; every movement of her body to him was provocative. To save his life he could not help absorbing and studying every contour of the swaying figure. It was the first time he had ever noticed the subtle, hesitating line of a woman's torso, and he gave himself up to the enchantment.

This dance of the Weldons closed the program for the evening. With the other men of the Settlement Gerald passed behind the scenes and was introduced to the artists in order to congratulate and thank them. As the sisters prepared to go the courage of despair came to Gerald, and he told the elder sister he should like to call on them. She noticed that while he spoke he looked at Chrissie, but she was flattered by the attention and asked him to come the next day, and so the fateful acquaintance began.

They lived, he found, in a couple of rooms in Mare Street, Hackney; the thoroughfare was noisy and vulgar, relentless in its sordid squalor. The sitting room shocked Gerald; it all seemed common, ugly, he said to himself, but Chrissie shone in the mean room as a diamond shines on black paper. She treated him as he had never been treated before, with perfect frankness. Evidently she had neither admiration for him nor fear of him. When he refused the cake and bread and butter she took an extra mouthful of cake herself and said:

"You don't know what you're missing," and laughed saucily. The careless words seemed to Gerald extraordinarily significant.

"Perhaps I don't know what I'm missing," he said; "I'll take some cake, if you please," and he did.

His desire to please made him tactful; he talked about their dancing. The elder sister, Doris, admitted that they were trying to get an engagement at the Palace Theater. Chrissie declared, with her mouth full, that she was going tomorrow to see old Norton, and that it would be hard lines if he did not engage them!

"Hard lines, indeed!" thought Gerald, with a pang of fear for the rivalry of unseen competitors.

All this while he was wondering how he could get to know the sisters better, become intimate with them as he had become intimate with Mrs. Leighton. He could have touched Mrs. Leighton, he felt, if he had wanted to; but he had never wanted to. Now every movement of Chrissie Weldon made him want to put his hands on her. After they had finished tea she sat in a chair opposite him and crossed her legs; the blood began to beat in his temples. A thought came to him:

"How are you going to the Palace?" he asked.

"On these, of course," she replied, thrusting forward her little feet. "Shanks' mare, eh, Doris?"

"Suppose I get a carriage and drive you there, and afterward take you round the park?"

"Oh, glory, glory," cried Chrissie, springing to her feet, "a landau with two horses, eh? Fancy, Doris, we'll be going like queens," and she seized her sister and danced her round and round.

Suddenly she stopped, pouting. "I forgot; I've only my old hat, and it's shabby, shabby!"

"Why not buy a new one?" suggested clever Gerald.

She looked at him eagerly. He pleased her, and had begun to interest her. But the elder sister broke in at once:

"We don't accept presents from gentlemen," she said primly, "although we think it very kind of you, Mr. Lawrence, all the same, and we'll accept your offer of the carriage with pleasure."

He felt depressed, wondered vaguely where middle-class morality began and where it ended. But nothing could subdue Chrissie's high spirits for long. The thought of the carriage intoxicated her, and again she flung her arms round her sister and whirled her round the room, singing:

"A carriage and pair in London town, in London town, in London town,
Only to earn an honest brown, an honest brown, an honest brown,"

while laughing over her shoulder coquettishly at Gerald.

Next day they had their drive. Doris made him wait with the carriage at the corner of a neighboring street, where they would not be known, and all through Hackney they drove with the carriage closed, but as soon as they got out of their own neighborhood the carriage was thrown open and the girls gave themselves over to the rare enjoyment.

At the Palace, too, they succeeded in getting an engagement. Chrissie's spirits were irresistible. She came out of the theater like a little mad thing, with flushed face and sparkling dark eyes, excited, as she said, to "the limit," and away they drove through the parks like grand ladies. Toward sunset Gerald proposed dinner, and swept away all opposition, and they had dinner together in the only place he knew—the East Room of the Criterion, where, however, the appointments and service were good enough to strike the sisters dumb with admiration. Driving home they both thanked him again and again. When he put them down near Mare Street, Gerald lifted Chrissie from the carriage in his arms—an unforgettable sensation.

He dismissed the carriage hastily; he wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

He seemed to walk on air. Life had taken on a new color for him, a new significance. His heart was beating as it had never beaten before; his blood all rhythmic—she was the loveliest creature in the world, the gayest, the sweetest, the most enchanting, the most desirable. He must win her, he felt, or lose the pearl of life.

After that long, first day the intimacy with Chrissie grew by leaps and bounds. Gerald could never remember the ebbing and flowing of the tide of passion that seemed to reach flood in an hour, and swept him away like a straw; but the moments of it were epochs in his life. One such moment occurred just before the first appearance of the sisters on the stage of the Palace Theater. The manager had been taken by their dancing in soldiers' dress and had ordered them new tights of the same sort, only more striking in color, and, of course, better made. When Gerald called one afternoon he found Chrissie alone. The girls had been trying on Chrissie's new costume; and Doris had had to run out for a few minutes to buy some tape. Chrissie talked to him through the half-open door.

"Do come in here," he pleaded; "I can't see you, and I want to."

She shook her head. "Doris wouldn't like it. You must wait."

"Please," he persisted, "do let me just see you. You are so beautiful. I'm sure the dress is perfect. Do come out."

The mischievous laughing face appeared at the half-open door.

"You must wait," she repeated, as if undecided. He went to the door and pushed it nearly open.

"Come in," he begged; "Chrissie, come in," and she yielded to his desire.

The traitor dress clothed her like a skin. Again his mouth parched and his temples beat as they did the first night he watched her on the stage. As he didn't speak, she grew a little piqued.

"You don't like it?" she asked a little anxiously, turning round as if to show it all to him.

The movement threw the line of her waist and the bold curve of the hips into relief: she was adorable; his hands went out of themselves; he caught her and drew her to him passionately. She turned her head over her shoulder and repeated archly:

"You don't like it?"

He bent down to her face.

"Of course, I like it," and he kissed her red lips; "who could help liking it? Chrissie, I love you, dear! Do you care for me?"

"Now, would I let you kiss me if I didn't?" she pouted. "You are too sweet to us. But tell me: do you like the dress?"

"It's charming," he said. "You do care, then, a little for me?"

She turned to him and put her arms round his neck like a child, and drew his head down and kissed him as innocently as a child kisses on the lips.

"I do like you," she said. "You're so kind, and I like your height and big eyes; but," she added gravely, "you must get stronger, you know. Doris thinks you're consumptive. You're not, are you?"

"No, no," he laughed. "I never was so well in my life, nor so strong." He stooped down and put his arms round her, and lifted her from the ground. She crowded with delight: "Oh, oh, oh!"

"You must put me down," she laughed delightedly. "If Doris came in she would be very cross. Quick! quick!" and she wriggled in his arms.

That fleeting instant and its poignant emotion remained with Gerald all his life. At any moment he could close his eyes and see again the mutinous gay, laughing face, the silky dark ringlets of hair, and the saucy challenging eyes, and could feel the round firmness of the limbs he was holding against him. His hands and body bore the imprint of her

form; it seemed to him as if the outline had been burned into his flesh.

He let her slide down slowly, for he was loath to part from her. As soon as she touched ground she shook herself to put her clothes straight, and ran laughing from the room.

He did all he could to get her to come out again; he even threatened to come in and fetch her. She cried out in mock alarm:

"No, no; you mustn't."

He knew the fear was only put on, and was about to go in when Doris opened the sitting-room door.

Why was it, he wondered later, that such magic moments in life are so fleeting-transitory?

The next incident that counted with Gerald was of a very different nature; it occurred on the first appearance of the sisters at the Palace Theater. A week before that event Mrs. Leighton came up to London, and everything was changed for him. Mrs. Leighton, contrary to her custom, was very exigent. She pressed him to come with her to choose furniture and curtains and a dozen other things; she insisted on being introduced to his father and invited him to lunch and dine with her. Gerald thought it strange that the two should strike up a friendship; for his father, though distinguished-looking, dropped his "h's," very often and always showed in his speech that he belonged rather to the lower than to the upper middle class. These little failings grated on Gerald sometimes, in spite of his love for his father; but Mrs. Leighton never seemed to notice them. She managed to engross Gerald so completely, what with luncheons and dinners and visits to Putney, that he could not spend half as much time with Chrissie as he desired. This annoyed him, and he began to show a certain coldness to Mrs. Leighton.

He did not know that his little impatiences were revealing his secret to that

observant lady just as clearly as if he had told her the whole truth. He did his best not to betray himself, for he felt instinctively that Mrs. Leighton would not like the sisters, and would dislike Chrissie in particular, and he cared for Chrissie so intensely that he could not bear the idea of her being criticized or looked at coldly. Accordingly he kept his love to himself, and reproached himself daily for not tearing himself free from Mrs. Leighton's importunities.

If he had only known it, no tactics could have served him better with Chrissie. He had brought an atmosphere of pleasure, and ease, and enjoyment into her life, and thrown over it the magic of love as well; but it all seemed so easy and natural to her that at first she rather underrated his devotion. But now that he stayed away for whole days, Chrissie missed him, as she complained to her sister, "at every hand's turn." She even began to fear that she might lose him altogether. She could not help dreading lest some of the ladies in the park might get him. She thought about him every hour, wondering where he was, what he was doing, why he stayed away, and when he would be back. Love's arrow's barbed, and the more it's disturbed the deeper it pierces. In a fortnight Chrissie's affection was intensified to love. Her time from eleven to four was taken up by rehearsals; but the evenings when Gerald stayed away were cruelly dull and empty. Gerald's days, too, were all filled by Mrs. Leighton, and he had continually to struggle to get free in the evening. But still the lovers met very often, and with every meeting their affection seemed to put forth fresh flowers.

By this time Mrs. Leighton knew that Gerald was in love with a singer; knew, too, that she would appear at the Palace Theater on the Monday night. On Tuesday or Wednesday the week before,

Chrissie had given Gerald a playbill in which the sisters were announced to appear. He had crumpled it up and thrust it into his pocket, but somehow or other Mrs. Leighton had got hold of it, and as soon as she saw "The Sisters Weldon," she felt that one of them had come between her and Gerald. She took a box on the grand tier for the Monday evening. As soon as she entered the box she saw Gerald in the front row of the stalls. When the sisters came on she picked out the younger sister, Chrissie, at once. "A vulgar, common little thing," she said to herself. "light-hearted, light-footed—light in every way. What fools men are! What fools!"

She hardly looked at Gerald; yet she knew that his glasses were glued to his eyes. She knew, too, that after the theater he would take "the little gutter sparrow" home. She felt certain that the sisters lived somewhere in the East End. A storm of clapping broke in upon her thoughts, the sisters were being recalled again and again; they had "caught on" the very first night. Mrs. Leighton was rather glad of their success; perhaps they would need Gerald less now.

When the sisters came on again in obedience to the demands of the house, she noticed that the younger sister exchanged glances with Gerald and danced for him, "at him," she said to herself viciously. Evidently the girl had been nervous at first; but now, having gained self-possession, was dancing for the man she loved. In spite of herself Mrs. Leighton felt Chrissie's charm, her sauciness, her exquisite girlish figure, the attraction of her childish, passionate appeal; but the feeling made her cold with hate and resolution.

"We shall see, my girl," she said to herself, "who will win," and she closed her opera glasses and went home.

When the sisters' second turn was over, Gerald went round to the stage

door to wait for them. He had hired a carriage to take them home. The commissioner told him they would be out in a few minutes. He nodded and waited, promising himself some amusement in the sights of the strange place. Suddenly he became aware that he had formidable rivals. There was a young, slim, good-looking fellow, whom he took to be an officer, who sent in two bouquets to the sisters, together with a card on which he had written a request that they would have supper with him. Gerald grew white with anger at the cool assumption of the man and the airy self-confidence of his manner. But he could not help admiring the young fellow when he took out half a sovereign and gave it to the commissioner, with the request that he should hand the bouquets to the elder sister and the note to the younger.

A few minutes later Gerald was face to face with another aspirant, a stout, overdressed Jew of about forty, to whom the commissioner was very polite. He wanted to know if the stage manager was in, and when the commissioner said he was, he laughed loudly.

"I'll go and see him, Williams," he said. "I want to know those Weldons, that's their name—isn't it? Eh? I'll just go in and see 'em."

To Gerald's rage he pushed through the stage door as if the place belonged to him.

The moments of waiting seemed to age Gerald; in five minutes he was whirled through a thousand emotions, and had made a hundred resolutions.

"If they speak to that cad, I'll never speak to them again," he vowed to himself. The next moment he wanted to choke the "foul brute," or beat his fat face into a pulp. The soldier, too, who whistled there nonchalantly, came in for a share of Gerald's rage and contempt. He hated him as much as he loathed the vulgarian. He determined to go away and leave Chrissie to her friends. Per-

haps she had already given them some encouragement; perhaps even she had already smiled on the fat man. His very soul sickened at the thought of any connection between them; she seemed to him dirtied by the man's desire. He would go away and leave them, and he turned toward the street. Just at that moment the swinging door was thrown open and the sisters came out, Chrissie first, as usual, carrying the officer's bouquet, as Gerald noticed at once. In a second the officer had come forward, and taking off his hat had begun to speak. Gerald suddenly felt that he, too, ought to have sent Chrissie a bouquet, and he was disgusted with himself for not thinking of it sooner. His anger with Chrissie had fled at the mere sight of her.

"My name's Vincent," said the officer, "I see you have my flowers, Miss Weldon. I do hope it's a sign that you and your sister will forgive the informality of the introduction and be my guests to-night at the Savoy?"

"Oh, thank you," said Chrissie prettily, "but we cannot come," and she passed straight on to Gerald.

"I saw you in front," she said to him, and in a whisper added: "I danced for you, sir!"

No one could resist her; yet Gerald heard himself answer in a strange, hard voice:

"Why did you speak to him?"

He noticed that the young fellow was talking to Doris. Even Doris was smiling at him, though she, too, refused his invitation.

The next moment Gerald had the sisters in the carriage and was driving away, the officer taking off his hat in gay salute, which filled the cup of Gerald's ill-humor to the brim.

"What's the matter, dear?" cried Chrissie.

"Nothing," replied Gerald angrily; "but why did you speak to him?"

"How could I help it?" said Chrissie

laughing, pleased with his manifest jealousy. "I had his flowers in my hand, and he was quite polite."

"Polite," repeated Gerald bitterly. "Did you see the old fat Jew?"

"The stage manager introduced Mr. Graham to us," she replied proudly. "He's a stockbroker and the chief shareholder in the theater; even Doris was polite to him, weren't you, Doris?"

"I didn't want to supper with him," replied Doris, "but I thought we had better."

Gerald felt strangled. Was this what his love had brought him, this unworthy competition, this vile rivalry? He saw, as with second sight, that the "guinea-pig," as he called him, was a more formidable competitor even than the good-looking young officer.

"Are all women venal?" he asked himself bitterly, for both the girls spoke of Graham with awed respect.

"He's very rich," said Chrissie.

"And knows every one," echoed Doris.

"Their very souls," he thought to himself, "are servile to riches and success."

But in a few minutes the reaction came. He would give Chrissie up to none of them. Why should he? He had good looks as well as the officer, and money to spend as freely as the City man. He triumphed to himself. Why should he not win? Why should he not take them to supper? At once, without asking, he put his head out of the window and told the coachman to drive to the Savoy.

"I'm going to take you to the Savoy to supper," he said.

"You dear!" cried Chrissie, clapping his face with her hands.

"Chrissie, Chrissie," cried Doris reprovingly. "It's very kind of you, Mr. Lawrence," she added; "but we're not dressed for the Savoy."

"Any dress will do," he said in his ignorance—the officer had said the

Savoy—and overbore their opposition. But when the sisters entered the restaurant and saw the girls and ladies elegantly gowned crowding into the supper room, both Doris and Chrissie shrank back declaring that it was impossible for them to go in; but he insisted, and carried the matter off with a high hand. When they were seated, however, he was annoyed to find that dress does make a difference to women, for both the girls were ill at ease.

"Why should you not let me give you frocks?" he said, as soon as he realized their discomfort. "Eat your supper and drink your champagne, and to-morrow you shall have two white evening gowns, and we'll come again. After all," he added, glancing round, "you're the two prettiest girls in the room."

And, indeed, the little dark dresses and unwonted hats seemed to set off the charm of the girls' youthful beauty. Many of the men as they passed out looked down at them with frank admiration. It seemed to Gerald as if the world were in a conspiracy to put him in a secondary place.

"But, after all," he said to himself, "I know Chrissie does care for me, and it will be my own fault if any one else gets her," and he redoubled his attentions.

While driving back he managed to take Chrissie's hand in the dark; it nestled into his all the way home, and gave him renewed courage and joy. With this support he wrung from Doris a half-promise that they would accept evening dresses from him. When they got inside the house, Chrissie made some excuse to turn back in the passage and speak to him at the street door. She gave him her lips at once.

"Good night, dear," she said. "It's been a treat," and she sighed contentedly.

When alone with his thoughts and able to analyze his impressions and emotions, Gerald realized that the poetry of

his love, the idyllic beauty of it, had vanished with the sense of combat. Chrissie was no longer angelic, she had become a little dancer, and he had to win her and keep her. His love had been transmuted by jealousy into passion, just as loneliness and disquieting doubts had deepened Chrissie's affection into love.

After leaving the theater Mrs. Leighton sat down and thought the matter over. "I need help," she confessed to herself. Her instinct had been right, she felt, in getting to know Gerald's father. She could reckon on the old man now, and use him. Early next morning she drove out to Putney, and while walking in the garden confided to old Mr. Lawrence all she knew about Gerald's "unhappy entanglement." She thought it her duty to tell him, she said. He must never let Gerald know where he had learned it. He must go to the Palace Theater to see for himself. She drew a shocking caricature of Chrissie as "a vulgar little dancing girl." Her appeal to the old man's prudery was decisive; in an hour she had worked him up to a passionate resolution. By lunch time she had assured herself that he knew just what he ought to say to Gerald.

The result was much what she anticipated. Stuttering with indignation, Mr. Lawrence went off to see Gerald next morning. He told him he was mad, that he must think of his career, and of decency, and so forth in the customary strain, and then returned to tell Mrs. Leighton all that he had said, leaving out the fact that he had asked Gerald why he didn't marry Mrs. Leighton, who was a lady of position and wealth, and beautiful to boot.

The suggestion startled Gerald as much as it angered him. He had never thought of such a thing, he said; besides, Mrs. Leighton was too old. But his father's unsparing condemnation of

Chrissie had had a certain effect on him. The old man's scorn for the girl who could show off her figure in tights really lit unworthy jealous suspicions in Gerald which bore evil fruits later. He was compact of English prejudices; he began to doubt the girl's purity, which was as obvious as sunlight, because of the way she danced and dressed.

A few hours after his father had given Mrs. Leighton his version of the lecture he had administered to his son, Gerald betook himself to Wilton Place, too, for sympathy and advice. Mrs. Leighton began by soothing and flattering him. Of course, true love was beautiful, she said, the ideal; but he had a great career before him, and he should consider his father's feelings. Gerald ought to be a prince of the church; princes only married common girls when they were born princes, but when they had to make themselves princes they could not afford to marry beneath them, and so forth.

"Don't you see, Chrissie's a miracle?" he asked, glowering. "There's no one like her."

Mrs. Leighton admitted that she was very pretty, but added that he really must not idealize her out of all likeness to humanity; she was illiterate, of course, and vain, glad to accept any one's attentions—both sisters were of the lower middle class. She saw at once that she was on the right track. "Do you really care for her—really?" she asked.

He nodded, his face rigid with pain. "Your father thinks you'll take her to Paris," she remarked casually, playing her trump boldly. Gerald, she felt, would soon tire of Chrissie in Paris.

He started to his feet.

"Oh! He—you—"

She faced him bravely.

"It would be the best thing you could do."

He glared at her.

"Why should you quarrel with me,

because I'd give you everything you want in life, I'd give you the moon if I could," and then she found the supreme word:

"If you don't take her, Gerald, some one else will."

It struck him to the very heart. Yes, if he didn't take her Graham would, and Doris would not help her to resist; *she* certainly was lower middle class, prim at once, and servile. And Chrissie, sweet though she was, was vain. What should he do?

His jealousy of Graham discolored the world for him; "some one else" rankled.

He left Mrs. Leighton in a whirl of jealousy, desire and wounded vanity.

Was he really making an angel, as she had said, of a little dancing girl; trying to see a London sparrow as a bird of paradise? How her words stung! They stung, he reflected, because of the truth in them. The picture of greasy, bald-headed Graham, like some obscene bird of prey, kept thrusting itself before his mind.

He could not rest in the Settlement. He went off to Mare Street to take them out. They were not in. The landlady confided to him that a gentleman had taken them out for the evening.

"What was he like?" Gerald asked, smiling to conceal his misery and rage.

"Oh, he was quite a gentleman—a foreign gentleman, I thought, a little elderly, but—he had brought fur wraps for both of them, real sable, Russian sable." The landlady was voluble in the giver's praise. Gerald's heart throbbed; it was Graham. He turned from the door thanking her. But he was called back. In her eagerness to help, the landlady called out to him that she had heard the gentleman say they would take supper at the Savoy.

Gerald went to the Savoy, and there they were in the restaurant. He waited about for more than an hour to see them come out. Chrissie, flushed with ex-

citement, talking sixteen to the dozen, as usual. His heart sank. As they reached the door he saw Graham put his hand on her bare arm to keep her back and let Doris go out first, and then he saw him, on the pretext of arranging her fur, touch her bare neck with his hand. Chrissie did not thrust him back, or shrink from his touch; she smiled at him, in fact, as she passed out.

Gerald was lost in jealous rage, dazed in agonies of doubt and fear. He was brought to himself by the porter tapping him on the arm:

"We must close, sir, if you please."

The restaurant was shrouded, dark; only the lights over the desk threw uncertain gleams; the carriages had all rolled away. He went out into the empty street.

All through the night he stormed; but as hour after hour went on, one thing became clear to him—he would have her; he would not leave her to that foul beast, that old Jew satyr. He would take her away at once. He must make no mistake. He would go first to Mrs. Leighton and ask her advice. He was at her house by eight o'clock in the morning, and she saw him at half past in her *peignoir*, and was all sympathy.

"You poor boy," she cried as she caught sight of him, "how ill you look!"

In spite of himself he told her everything—his doubts of Chrissie, his suspicions, everything—he raved to her, and then broke down and cried like a child with his head on her knees, sobbing hysterically. He alarmed her; she feared for his reason; she had never before understood how weak he was. There was nothing for it, she felt, but to give the child his toy. With this purpose she spoke, encouraging him. Of course, Chrissie loved him, but she was shallow and vain. He must be always with her, never leave her alone, he must take her to the theater and back again, to dinner and to supper. If the other gave them furs, Gerald must give them

dresses and hats. If the other recommended them to stage managers, Gerald should take the stage managers out to supper with them.

She concluded: "If Graham gets them a rise in salary, you must give them bracelets and brooches. Play the man," she cried at him finally, "and not the mouse."

Before she had half finished, all the man in him had responded to her. He kissed her hands and caught her to him, and kissed her face, and hurried off to carry out her instructions, and to tread the primrose path to his desire.

In twenty-four hours he had reason to congratulate himself. In a week he had won Chrissie so that she had no thought or wish beyond him. The dresses he gave her, and the jewels, forced even Doris to agree with the landlady that he was madly in love; but still he could not induce Chrissie to take the irrevocable step and leave London. He wanted to get her away from Graham and his vile attentions; but to Chrissie leaving London meant leaving Doris and success on the stage. The girl's loyalty to her sister was invincible. He went again to Mrs. Leighton. Her advice was veiled, but decisive.

"Win her," she said, "and the girl will follow you."

"But how? What do you mean?" he asked. "Do help me!"

Mrs. Leighton looked at him. Could any man be so inconceivably ignorant?

"Take her for a long drive," she said at length, "up the river, or out to Hampstead, or to Richmond. Take a private room in some hotel—the Star and Garter if you like—and lunch and dine together; make up your mind and you are sure to win her." With feminine malice she added, "She's only waiting to be persuaded."

Gerald went from her in a fever, resolute but still self-deceiving; he would not look facts in the face. But still, there could be no harm, he said to him-

self, in taking Chrissie out, and he engaged a private room and induced Chrissie to come with him alone.

They lunched together—he in a fever of excitement, Chrissie a little subdued and not quite at ease, but intensely happy. There was something thrilling to both of them in being alone together. He took delight in helping her to this and that, and then the joy of jumping up and kissing her while the waiter was out of the room; and afterward, when the waiter had cleared away and left them, she kissed him, too, bravely, again and again, and Gerald took his love in his arms and they sat together for hours, almost without speaking, shut off from the world in the divine intimacy of passion. Gradually the dusky shadows crept in and filled the room and hid them from sight or sound, they two together, mouth on mouth, till the girl, too, gave herself wholly to love, and the dark eyes fluttered and lost themselves.

A week later they were in Paris.

Although she expected the news, Mrs. Leighton took it badly; she spent the day given over to all the torments of jealousy: she cried with rage, and dried her tears in hot contempt of her rival; she burned and throbbed, and cooled to frigid resolve and hate; at dinner she could not eat, complaining still of headache—it was heartache she felt, pain that gripped her heart and almost choked her. That he should prefer that vulgar, shallow little slut to her; that he was kissing her now and happy with her!

Next morning she went off to find Doris, determined to win her as she had won Gerald's father. "With the two highest trumps in my hand," she thought, "I can do as I like."

She found Doris horrified and indignant, but she soon calmed her down, persuading her gradually that nothing need get about. "No one need know if we don't tell."

In a few days she had overcome all Doris' suspiciousness. She was not in

a hurry. There was time enough. Gerald should have his honeymoon. She would not be surprised, she said to herself, if the honeymoon was quite long enough for him. She knew men pretty well, and her understanding of Gerald was uncanny. Meanwhile she had Doris to lunch and Doris to dinner, and bit by bit won the girl's complete confidence. When she told Doris she was much prettier than her sister, and must make a really sensible marriage with a good, steady man, Doris felt that at last she had met a real friend. Doris quickly came to admire Mrs. Leighton as a sort of model, for the two had a good deal in common. Mrs. Leighton knew the very moment when Doris turned from doubt of her to admiration, and then it was an easy matter to persuade her that it was her duty to go to Paris and put an end to the scandal by getting her sister to leave Gerald. By this time, too, Mrs. Leighton had worked up old Mr. Lawrence to go with her and help to bring the runaways to reason. Naturally she kept Mr. Lawrence and Doris steadily apart. It would never do to let them know each other, she felt; they were both of the same class, and like might recognize like. Besides, by keeping them apart she could use Doris as a whip to old Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Lawrence as a bogey with which to frighten Doris. She really played her game with considerable ingenuity, served by jealous feminine instinct and by an unveiled understanding of both the physical and spiritual sides of the problem.

In a month, as Mrs. Leighton had foreseen, Gerald's passion had died of satiety; long before the month had come to an end, indeed, his physical weakness and Chrissie's natural tenderness had brought him almost to illness, his worn-out nerves vibrating between exhaustion and exasperation. In this state every little common phrase of Chrissie's jarred on him, her childishness seemed

silly, her longings for her sister sentimental drivel. He soon felt that Mrs. Leighton had read the girl aright: she was shallow and ill-regulated—all in extremes. The truth was, his physical weakness rendered him incapable of making any allowance for Chrissie after the first few days, and he had no idea how lonely and disconsolate, how homesick and heartsick, she became in the foreign capital. Chrissie was hardly more than a child—a gregarious, ingenuous, vain, charming little creature who lived on praise and hopes of pleasure. When her sister didn't want to talk, she talked to the landlady or to the servant; there was constant companionship for her in Hackney. Here in Paris there was no one to talk to, no one to admire her, nothing on earth to do. In three days she began to be bored, and every effort she made to win Gerald seemed to result in failure. After the first week he hardly wanted to speak to her; she had no understanding of him at all; she was hurt, and then indignant. She began to notice his faults and became increasingly dissatisfied: he was always polite, but he did nothing but read and read, and whenever they went out he took her to churches and picture galleries and museums where she could only see old frumps and fogies. She was like a young bird used to sunshine and gay, quick flirts of flight and snatches of song, thrust to solitary quiet in a gloomy cage; for to her the vast hotel was a cage or a prison. If that was love, she hated it. All the little differences of sex and temperament brought her to tears. Gerald seemed to get tired of her petting and caressing and loving; she could only believe he was getting tired of her. When she thought of a new way of amusing him by coming behind him in a new dress and blindfolding him, he got cross and cold, and never noticed the dress. From the beginning she had regretted yielding to him without marriage, and every day she regretted it

more; it seemed wrong to her to be living with him. She hadn't wanted to leave her sister, and now she wanted to see her more and more till she ached with the longing.

One afternoon Doris walked into her bedroom, and Chrissie threw herself into her arms and burst into inarticulate sobbings of regret and relief. For over an hour Doris could do nothing but kiss and comfort her: "Everything would come right, everything; she must be sure of that. She would not leave her again." For Chrissie seemed heart-broken, and clung to her as if afraid. She never even noticed Gerald's absence, never knew that he had gone to call on Mrs. Leighton in answer to a telegram; Doris was everything to her.

Doris' rage against Gerald, which unconsciously had a tincture of jealousy in it, grew to cold hatred as she realized how unhappy her little sister had been. She had always been a little envious of Chrissie, for Chrissie had outshone her as a dancer by dint of a little more courage in displaying her feelings, and now she realized with a certain satisfaction that it was this thoughtless courage which had brought Chrissie to grief. But the recognition of her own superiority of nature only made her more pitiful to her little sister. So she comforted Chrissie, assured her that everything would be all right; she mustn't worry, everything would be arranged.

"He's not been unkind to you, has he?" she asked.

"No," sobbed Chrissie, "not exactly unkind, but men are so different from what I thought, so different. He's all the time reading and teaching me, and I don't want to be improved. He didn't want me to write to you till I could write without making mistakes, as if that mattered. He's nice, but he's a fool." "Prig" was probably the word she would have used if she had known it. Her little vanity had resented the teacher's attitude which Gerald assumed

all too easily. Her resentment seemed inexplicable even to herself; for at bottom she was loyal.

"He's good, you know," she explained, "and I think, perhaps, he loves me in his way; but men are so different from us, so different," and she clung to her sister in an April storm of smiling and sobbing—heart at ease, at last, in that custom of affection which means so much to women. While comforting her sister, Doris did not lose sight of her mission.

"You must leave him, Chrissie," she said at length: "it's wrong to live like this without being married."

"He'll marry me," replied Chrissie in astonishment, drawing away; "he said he would."

"How can he without money!" replied Doris, coached by Mrs. Leighton. "His father is furious, and won't give him a penny unless he leaves you."

"But he can't leave me," cried Chrissie, horror-stricken; "he promised, and where could I go? I could never show my face again. Oh!" And she blanched with a thousand fears.

"We'll make it all right, dear," comforted Doris, "no one need ever know, and I'll never leave you again, and you must never leave me, you naughty, naughty little sis to run away and never say a word."

"He wouldn't let me tell you. I wanted to," cried Chrissie, always repentant on this score. "I really wanted to; you must believe me."

And Doris did believe her, and soon managed to find out that there was no new reason why her sister should not leave Gerald. As soon as she was assured of this, she immediately adopted Mrs. Leighton's view that five pounds a week for life was a very good substitute indeed for a man who would always be ashamed of one, and who had been unkind even on the honeymoon. Besides, Mrs. Leighton was right. Chrissie

was too young to be married; the elder sister should marry first.

Doris returned to Mrs. Leighton to tell her that Gerald had "behaved shameful" to Chrissie and that if she could have her sister to herself for a day or two, she'd get Chrissie reconciled to leaving him. Mrs. Leighton must keep Gerald away for a little while.

Gerald found Mrs. Leighton in an attitude of resigned sorrow; she even blamed him a little.

"You've hurt your father, Gerald," she said, "and I think you ought to be kind to him."

In some confusion, for he was not prepared for this condemnation from his confederate, Gerald promised to be nice, but—

Mrs. Leighton left the room, and his father came to him. Mr. Lawrence had been well schooled; he acted the heavy father to the life.

"Enough of this fooling," was about all he could find to say. "You've had your fling, and now it's all over. You look shocking bad, Gerald," he added in his natural, kindly way.

"I'm going to marry Chrissie," said Gerald with quiet firmness.

"You're mad; you'd never be such a fool," roared the old man, his real opinions breaking through the veneer of custom. "What can the girl do for you?" And then, bethinking himself of the argument supplied to him: "If you do marry her, you'll not get a penny of my money, I can tell you. I won't be a party to such folly. You must be a softie to talk such nonsense. I've no patience with you."

Mrs. Leighton had to appear to prevent them quarreling, but his father's angry outburst had its effect on Gerald. Mrs. Leighton managed to persuade him not to go back to his hotel that night.

"You'll only meet Doris," she said, "and she's furious with you. There'll be a scene if you two meet."

But, in spite of Gerald's hatred of a

scene, he utterly refused to leave Paris without first seeing Chrissie, and getting his dismissal from her own lips.

"If Chrissie doesn't want me, I'll do whatever you like," was his final word.

Underneath his disillusion and weakness there was a small fount of passionate tenderness. If Chrissie was, indeed, tired of him, he'd go; otherwise nothing would induce him to leave her. His father might do what he pleased with his money. Mrs. Leighton was astonished at his obstinacy. 'Twas Doris saved the situation. She told Mrs. Leighton that in another twenty-four hours she'd answer for Chrissie, and she got the time she wanted.

The pair met in the presence of Mrs. Leighton and Doris.

"Do you want to leave me, Chrissie?" cried Gerald, holding out his hands to her.

"What can I do?" she replied. "Your father won't give you anything, and he hates me and you—you——" And she burst into tears and fell into her sister's arms.

"Don't you think you've done her enough harm?" barked Doris savagely, and in despair Gerald obeyed Mrs. Leighton's gesture and left the room.

"He never even kissed me," wept Chrissie.

"We're well rid of him," snapped Doris viciously; "he cares for no one much, not even for himself."

And so Mrs. Leighton had her way, and took a very sulky, hurt and subdued Gerald back to London with his father, while the sisters Weldon drifted out again into their own world under improved conditions. For despite what romantic authors may say, such wounds as Chrissie's heal quickly in healthy flesh.

But though Mrs. Leighton had got her way, she was far too clever to try to reap the reward at once. Besides she was a little annoyed and hurt with Gerald for the struggle he had cost her and

the trouble he had put her to. She shut herself up in her house in Wilton Place, and gave out that she was not well enough to receive. But the separation was short. Gerald was more unable than ever to endure loneliness; he needed sympathy and praise; in fact, he missed Mrs. Leighton now from morning till night, he simply could not do without her. And she could not resist his importunity.

For a long time he seemed emptied of ambition, the spring of life broken in him. Mrs. Leighton soon noticed the listlessness, but hoped to bring him back quickly to his old self. For some months, however, her hopes were in vain, and the reason lay beyond her fathoming. The truth is, whenever he got a little strength, thoughts of Chrissie came to him; tender memories of their life together in Paris—that life which had seemed so full of disappointments at the time, but which now had become charming and beautiful to him in retrospect. All the little disagreements and pains dropped out of his mind, and he only remembered the exquisite moments of joy and tenderness. At such times his whole being was given over to love of Chrissie, and to regret that he had ever left her. Since she had faded out of his life, he realized that no one would ever delight him as she had delighted him. Existence seemed dull and futile, stale to loathing. In vain he fasted; in vain he read for twelve or fourteen hours a day; he could only tire himself; and as soon as he was rested, the memory of Chrissie came back to him to torment him, and to make of all the best moments of his life one passionate regret. During the day he could at least struggle with the obsession, or even forget it over a book, or in talk; but at night he was defenseless, and memories of her child love and pretty caresses broke his sleep. As he was unable to banish the vivid dreams by any effort of will, he held himself guiltless in regard to

them, and, with the casuistry of desire, soon went further. He accustomed himself to think of Chrissie just before going to sleep, a habit which he soon found made dreaming of her almost a certainty. The self-indulgence soon began to tell on his health, and so, as time went on, he did not get stronger, but weaker. His father could not make out what was the matter with him; he lost all patience with his moping as he called it.

Mrs. Leighton, with her feminine intuition, had a clearer idea of Gerald's suffering and the necessary remedy.

One day Mr. Lawrence had been complaining that Gerald seemed to be growing weaker, and Mrs. Leighton told him plainly that Gerald was killing himself, and that there was only one way to save him. He understood her, and begged her to take Gerald in hand without delay. A little while after they were engaged, and Mrs. Leighton set herself to fight the memory of Chrissie as she had fought and beaten Chrissie herself. But she found the memory and aura of the girl formidable antagonists. Still she struggled on with tenacity and ability.

She got Gerald ordained as a priest with great ceremony. She arranged an invitation for him to preach his first sermon in one of the most important London churches, and she took care that the church should be filled with a very select audience. She advised him about his sermon, and made him rehearse it again and again to her till every effect was perfect. His first appearance in London as a preacher was a social event. He had brought with him from Oxford a great reputation, and the couple of years in which people had lost sight of him only added to their eagerness to see whether he had fulfilled his youthful promise.

In the interval, too, Lord Woodstock had become a prominent politician, and already a good many Conservatives looked upon him as the coming leader of the party. Woodstock's high opinion

of the "Saint" was of itself sufficient to have filled the church, but there were other influences at work.

Gerald was what is called "High Church." In all cases of doubt he turned to the practices of the early Christians, and accordingly was supported by this militant section of the church.

He chose his text from the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians. He read the sentences out in the toneless, impressive way already described: "The enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction . . . whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . ."

Again and again he repeated the text: "The enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction . . . whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . ."

The most original thing in the sermon was the way he dwelt on the necessity of fasting, and the benefits to be derived from it. "Fasting," he said, "had gradually grown into a rule and become a part of the discipline of the Catholic Church. Why? Because of the virtue in it: because of its good effects. The whole world was being ransacked to-day to satisfy the desires of the rich of our great cities. Birds were brought from Asia, meat from New Zealand, fish from the northern oceans, fruits from the uttermost parts of the earth, wines were grown with such care that every leaf was cleansed and cherished, and yet Paul asserted that those 'whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . . are the enemies of the cross . . . doomed to destruction . . .'"

The earthly custom was to pamper the appetite, the Christian rule was abstinence. He declared that those who had not undergone the discipline were incapable of the highest thought—they were enemies of perfection. Perfect health, he asserted, could only be found by fasting regularly. It was one of the means to perfectness.

This contradiction between the earthly custom and the heavenly rule offered an easy test of the truth of the Christian doctrine. No doctor would ever tell you to fast. He would tell you to eat and drink moderately. That was the Pagan idea of virtue—Aristotle's idea. The wise of this world would regard fasting as an extreme, as they regarded gluttony as an extreme; virtue was in moderation. This was as far as the wisdom of the world went, but the wisdom of the Cross went further—it went to an extreme, it promised a more perfect health to those who denied themselves and fasted.

"It is within the reach of every one to find out for himself or for herself," he said, "whether the discipline of the church is good or bad. It is an easy thing to fast for one day. Every one in this church, every one now listening to me, should fast this coming Friday, and on Saturday you will all know whether the words of my text come from God or not. You will then find out whether those who 'mind earthly things' are indeed vowed to success, as most people imagine; or to 'destruction,' as St. Paul asserted."

The sermon was an unexpected success even among men who cared little for the spirituality of the preacher's appearance. Was fasting, indeed, a means of perfection, they wondered. It was a new idea to them. Here Gerald had really preached new words, for he had new knowledge, new personal experience to back him.

After the sermon Woodstock accompanied Gerald to lunch at Mrs. Leighton's. He called Gerald the "Saint;" told him he must be careful not to fast too much; admitted that he himself was beginning to get stout since he had dropped all exercise. "In fact, I'm going to try Gerald's remedy," he added laughingly.

At the end of the meal he told Gerald

very quietly that he would do anything to help him at any time.

"I don't want to be included among the enemies," he added, "even if I do mind earthly things."

Though Mrs. Leighton took care that Gerald should hear all the praise his sermon called forth, his success did not inspire the preacher as she had hoped. He soon dropped back into listless regret, into a sort of melancholy brooding. Mrs. Leighton realized that something would have to be done at once—she married him.

At first the experiment seemed to be an utter failure. Gerald got worse instead of better; he began to cough, and alarmed her about his health. She took him to the Riviera without result. The gayety and distractions of Nice and Monte Carlo only left him more and more listless and tired. After a great deal of thought she resolved to take him to the Holy Land.

It says much for her unselfishness and real kindness of nature that she passed two years with him in Palestine and the Near East without complaining of the many hardships, or even regretting London society, and at length she had her reward, such as it was.

In the course of the first winter spent in Palestine, Gerald began to get interested in the spirit of Christianity. The creed had something in it which suited his nature; its lessons of humility and loving sympathy appealed to him, just as the self-renunciations of the church had appealed to him. He encouraged himself in the belief that he, too, had been "called and chosen."

While living in Jerusalem, and visiting Bethlehem, and Capernaum, and Gennesaret, and all the other sacred places, and steeping himself in the Epistles, Gerald began to feel the stirrings of a new ambition; might not he, too, "conquer through his own weakness," as St. Paul had done?

After he had exhausted the Holy

Land, he determined to follow the journeyings of St. Paul in a small sailing ship; he even stopped at all the places where the great Apostle had stopped, and thus, after many experiences, came in springtime by way of Naples to Rome.

His spiritual history all the while was intimately affected by his bodily health. As ambition awoke in him and his life grew more attractive, he dreamed less, and as the spiritual ideal grew stronger, the image of Chrissie gradually dwindled away. For the first couple of years of married life his relations with his wife had been platonic. He now began to be troubled about his behavior to her; perhaps he had done wrong.

In the great church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, outside the walls of Rome, he was vouchsafed new spiritual guidance, and underwent what he always afterward regarded as his "consecration."

To him the place was sacred; the very road beyond the walls was the road trodden by the indomitable missionary—"persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed." He walked along it as he imagined the two Apostles had walked together; he stopped where tradition says they stopped, and in the great church at eventide he knelt and prayed. Suddenly he realized that the past was past, that he must begin a new life. The vision of "what is perfect" overpowered him, and the relief he felt in the new decision was evidence to him of heavenly interposition and leading.

He went back to his wife in the hotel, and took her in his arms and kissed her: "I was blind, and now I see," dear," he said to her, and she was content to take it at that.

When they returned to England Gerald felt his path straight before him; the taproots of his success would be his own personal experiences. The passion which had almost wrecked his life, which had brought him to misery, he

would preach against, as St. Paul had preached against it. Fasting had given him new ideas and renewed health, had taught him that renunciation was a step to perfection, and it never occurred to him that what was evil to him might be good to a stronger man. He would advocate two of St. Francis' three vows—poverty, which really meant fasting, and chastity.

In the brutal materialism and mawkish sentimentality of London his preaching had an extraordinary effect. His special knowledge of the Holy Land helped him to vivify every sermon. He was made a Canon of Westminster, and as he only preached three or four times a year on account of weak health, his sermons soon became social functions.

Ten years later he was made a bishop, and Woodstock brought half a dozen of his colleagues, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, to hear his first sermon.

Ever since his return to England Gerald had led a life of persistent self-denial by night and by day; for years he had eaten no meat, and drunk nothing but water; he had tried to reach the Christian ideal. He had been helped by his weaknesses rather than by his endowments; as far as he could go, he had gone. He had aged twenty years in the last ten, and at thirty-six was already an old man. His hair was silver-white, the flame of life burned low in him, his self-denying asceticism had brought him to the edge of things where one looks into the void and shudders at the ghostly air. All this spiritualized his appearance and intensified the power of his preaching. Our souls get subdued to the stuff we work in, and Gerald's whole nature now for years and years had been steeped in self-renunciation, gentleness and spiritual aspiration.

The great abbey was full of distinguished people; such an audience had rarely been brought together. As usual, Gerald had prepared every word. He

had chosen his text with extreme care. He had taken it from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."

The archbishop, a stout, healthy, thrusting prelate and man of the world, had a good-natured contempt for Gerald, and had come to the service in a spirit of utter disbelief in his saintliness; but he could not prevent a thrill of emotion and wonderment as Gerald rose in the pulpit and looked out over the congregation. His silver hair, refined, thin features and great eyes had their accustomed effect; his voice was so toneless that it had no individuality, it seemed superhuman, so to speak, in its impersonal monotony.

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." Again and again Gerald let the text sink in.

The long pauses were partly due to physical weakness, partly to the fact that on this day of days he was resolved to follow the example of Paul himself, and to glory in the confession of his own shortcomings. He told how he used to eat and drink and mind earthly things, and how fasting had led him to the upward path. He told, too, with many breaks in his utterance, of the temptations of passion, the humiliations it entailed, its bitter disappointments; he spoke with a dying fall in his voice of its transitoriness, its fleeting summer, its haunting remorse; the only consolation was that it pointed to higher things, as shadows all point to the sun.

The latter part of the sermon had no sequence in it. Gerald had yielded to his emotion while controlling its expression, and the effort had exhausted

him. In the hush of reverent sympathy fragments of loved texts fell from his lips. He desired, he said, to look not at "the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

After another pause, the slow words fell one by one on the breathless silence:

"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you," and then the voice died away and the preacher's head drooped forward on the desk—he had fainted.

The effect on the audience was extraordinary; women sobbed aloud, and men unused to weeping had to sniff and cough.

They carried Gerald to the sacristy, the archbishop and Woodstock stood about while his wife tended him. As soon as he was able to sit up he was full of apologies.

"I am so sorry," he said. "I am afraid I should not have attempted it; my weakness is too great."

They encouraged him, but his eyes closed in another syncope. At his wife's suggestion the two went away leaving him to her.

"I think I was right," said Woodstock to the archbishop, "to speak of Gerald Lawrence as a saint."

The archbishop sniffed; though there was not much thought in him there was a considerable knowledge of life and a very rank skepticism.

"Humph! H'm!" he grunted. "His spirituality seemed to me to be of fasting and not of faith; but I dare say he's a good man;" and then, thinking of Gerald's pathetic attempt to smile in the sacristy, he added: "Perhaps he's as near a saint as we're likely to see."

By Elinor Mordaunt

Author of



"Mr. Affan"

The GOLD FISH

JUST past the Trafalgar Hotel, which overhangs the river at East Greenwich, there runs an alley with a double row of small houses facing each other eye to eye. The backs of those on the south side are hemmed in by a huddle of miscellaneous buildings—that might have been shot out of a rubbish tip, save for the two at the far end, from the upper windows of which one may catch a glimpse of the serene, flower-bordered walks and mulberry trees of Trinity Hospital gardens.

But the houses on the river side are pierced by alleys and arches, revealing a strip, or half lemon, of silvery light, crossed and recrossed by sienna-tinted sails, fractions of great steamers trailing pennants of smoke, or the whole body of a Tilbury Lighterage Tug with its striped yellow and red funnel; each picture set deep in a framework of blackened buildings.

It was in the upper room of one of these riverside houses, built of black, overlapping timber, that Dor lived—Isidore or d'Or, as may be, but Dor alone to his own set, his admirers, his

hangers-on, his enemies, tools, and such like; he had no friends.

Dor was a dago of sorts, but his woman, Rosa, was native to the place. Yet take her ten miles away from the Surrey Side and she would have bloomed—until she wilted from sheer boredom—as an exotic, the completest alien. For the term English was too wide for her; Aryan would have meant as much. She was just London, pure London, and South London at that; with none of the fine-drawn, anæmic look of the middle east, the parched aspect of the northeast—the west is neither here nor there—but the full-blooded, damask-checked, broad-hipped aspect of the women of south London; fed by the changing air of a tidal river, arrogant, coarse, proud and voluptuous, giving kisses and curses, all alike, with a sort of regal arrogance.

She was out of the house, shivering with the mottled cold of perfect health, under the subway to the far side, and up to Billingsgate by a ha'porth of bus at four o'clock each morning of her life, cleaning fish, with the whitest apron, the

most majestically towering plumes, the longest gold earrings of any woman in the market.

She was home, in the one room overhanging the river, by nine, her day's work finished, ready to pass the remaining hours in superb idleness, leaning over the edge of her window, which bellied out from the crazy building, exchanging pleasantries with the barge-men who hugged the shore against the outflowing tide.

It was wonderful how she stuck to Dor.

The truth lay in the attraction of opposites.

She could never get to the end of him. When she began to think she knew him, something happened which gave her decision the lie. At times he went wild over her; at other times the red, white, and black beauty of her—she had eyes like sloes—encountered a glance of cold distaste, a look which said plainly enough that he had never seen her before, and never wanted to see her again.

"Cover yourself up, woman," he'd say, and Rosa would obey, sullen and furious, but strangely hurt.

On some days his passion wrapped her like a flame. There was nothing she had ever seen, or heard, or felt, to be compared with it; but there were other days—aye, and days upon days—when nothing fleshy touched him, when he was white and set and maddeningly still.

There were days of reticence, of odd, fastidious prudery; and there were days of intricate wickedness, of sly, painstaking devilry, which made her flesh creep, which even she, limited by her vocabulary, called "nasty."

He was a "crook," a "wrong 'un," she knew that; but it made no difference. What she resented, and what helped to hold her, was the fact that he never told her what he did, where he went, whom he spoke to, where his money came from.

None of his failings was the sort she knew. Dor never drank anything but water, not even the thin red wine of other dagoes; he never fought, he seldom swore; he was very clean in his person and curiously fastidious over the one room which they occupied. Always when Rosa got back from work, she would find the place swept and garnished, the bedding and pillows hung out over the window sill to air; and the goldfish, with its bowl set on a table by the window, swimming in crystal clear water.

When Dor drank glass after glass of that fluid, which Rosa declared she never "touched," "excepting to wash down a pill," she would taunt him with being the dead spit of that—something—something—something fish o' his, endowing it with a warmth of circulation alien to its kind.

True, it had ruby spots on its golden sides, but the epithets had nothing to do with color or circulation; they were a mere matter of habit.

After all, the fish was, so far as appearances went, commonplace enough; so was Dor's affection for it. Men who have been much at sea, as he had been, take to strange pets. What was really odd was Rosa's attitude. Rosa, in the main so generous and broad-minded, to be jealous of a fish!

But that was the truth of it. She had never felt like that about anything, or anybody, before. There was no bitterness or jealousy in her; life had been too full, and there were plenty of fish in the sea. But now this fish in the bowl poisoned the world as far as she was concerned. Dor would talk to it. Always, burned into her consciousness, there was the picture of the man she loved, with his fine hooked nose and dark mustache, silhouetted out against the window—the silvery sky, which was half light and half smoke, the tall chimneys across the river—bent almost double over the little table, with his arms

outstretched round the bowl, gazing down at the fish, always with that strange, drawn back, intent look, that set whiteness.

Sometimes he would be talking to it in a low voice, a strange language, though he always dropped to silence when Rosa entered the room. All this obsessed her so that she began to hurry home from work "to catch him at it;" to start off out shopping, and steal back for something she pretended that she had forgotten.

That fish upset her, changed her life, her whole jovial outlook. She had never cried since she was a kid and had toothache, until she knew Dor, but now she had furious bouts of weeping. She spent every penny she made on clothes, a watch bracelet, and neck chain; she flaunted the attentions of other men, boasted of conquests, went back on pals; would have wiped the floor with herself to please Dor; or, rather, in some strange way, to outdo the fish.

Once, when they first came together, he had told her the history of the creature. It was a Chinaman, whose life he had saved, who gave it to him.

"You have two souls," said the Chinaman. "Evelly fellow, he have two souls, body-soul and the soul that have nothing to do with body. You give flish your body-soul and you be velly much all light, no fellow be able to kill you. You go out, you do what you velly dam well like, no fellow hurt you so long as that flish swim round an' round in his bowl. Velly nice that, eh, what?"

Dor did not tell Rosa all this. He told her that a Chinaman had given him the fish and that it would bring luck, that as long as it lived he would never get badly "had."

He did not tell her more because he never entirely trusted any one.

Neither did he tell her of the quaint little ceremony which accompanied the gift—the way in which the Chinaman took a tiny drop of faintly-tinted, re-

luctant blood from somewhere near the fish's gills and inoculated his benefactor's arm with it, putting a drop of Dor's blood in its place. For, not only did he mistrust Rosa, he realized her limitations in everything apart from love-making.

At that time she rather liked the fish. Even later on, much as she grew to hate the creature, it attracted her. She was always conscious of it, as she was of Dor himself—loving or hating him.

After the first six months of their life together Dor's absences grew more frequent and prolonged. The first time that he was away for several days together Rosa said to herself: "Let the fish die. I ain't going to trouble myself to empty its mucky bowl!"

She was oppressed by a heavy sense of misery.

After a couple of days the water in the fish bowl grew so thick that she could scarcely see the creature. When she put her face quite close, it became evident that it was swimming more and more slowly, that its gills were working desperately, like miniature fans.

Looked at like that, it was magnified to an immense size; there was something menacing and fatal in its dull glance. The golden scales had faded to a putty color; only across its back, just behind its head, was a large blotch of scarlet into which all the ruby spots seemed to have concentrated themselves.

When Rosa went to bed on the third night, she could hear the creature giving little leaps in the water and falling back with a heavy splash. Sometimes she really thought that it made a sort of sobbing sound.

At last she could bear it no longer, and, getting out of bed, cursing furiously, she emptied the water and filled the bowl afresh.

Next day Dor came home. His first look at the glass bowl, at the fish swimming buoyantly in the clear water,

turned Rosa sick with the realization of what it would have meant for her if she had let the creature die.

Dor's face was white and bloodless; he looked like a man who was recovering from a bad illness. As he hung over the bowl she saw that the back of his coat between his shoulders bulged uglyly.

Suddenly he looked up and smiled at her, his white teeth gleaming.

"Heart of my life," he said; and, pulling her onto his knee, began to draw the tips of his fingers softly up and down her bare forearm.

In a moment she felt at ease, sleepily, blissfully contented. Moving her limbs like a cat under Dor's touch, she stretched up one arm round his neck.

"Arr-r!" He broke into a snarl as he jumped to his feet and pushed her from him. Then, with a cautious movement, he slipped his arms from his coat and vest and signed to Rosa to help him with his shirt; sitting down, white to the lips, beaded with sweat from the agony of it.

His shoulder and neck were swathed in rough, dirty bandages. As Rosa unwound them, a long, jagged wound was laid bare, still open, but clean and wholesome.

"They nearly did me in this time, the——"

"Where was it?"

"The other side." Dor glanced at her sideways; he was pleased with her; she had watered his fish, but one could never be sure of a woman, and he would not tell her more. He had his pockets crammed with money—notes and small change—which he made her sew into the mattress for him.

Next day there was an account in the halfpenny papers of a burglary in the office attached to a warehouse on the Isle of Dogs, in which a night watchman had been nearly done to death—would have been if another watchman had not appeared on the scene, at-

tracted by his cries. This man swore that he had thrown an ax after the assailant, and hit him, too, a tale which was substantiated by the blood which still showed upon the missile when it was produced. But that seemed the end of it. For there was no clew to the identity of the criminal, who got clear away, in spite of what must have been a pretty serious wound.

It was, too. Not that Rosa minded that. Dor's flesh healed as quickly as a child's, and it took more than the sight of a little blood to upset her, and during the few days when he lay low in bed, weak and dependent, he was entirely hers. He had curly black hair, and while he lay asleep, through those close middays, she would slip to her knees, push her hands in among it, and kiss the ringlets which twined over her fingers.

What did trouble her was that mark at the back of the goldfish's head. She could not have told why, but it gave her the creeps.

There was a trapdoor in the floor of their room which opened into the arch beneath, while the arch itself gave sheer upon the river, where Dor kept a crazy tub of a boat swinging with the tide or stuck in the mud. One day a couple of the river police came to call on him, and he slipped through the trapdoor and away up the alley without the man left waiting in the launch so much as setting an eye on him. Another day when the land police, whom he regarded with contempt, looked in upon him he turned his boat upside down—for it was low tide—and lay in the mud beneath it, half suffocated but triumphant.

It was a perfect place to live. But it began to be too well known and they moved, Dor and Rosa and the goldfish, along with their household belongings, all together in a boat one foggy evening.

Dor made her carry the fish. It was dreadful. Her first thought, when the

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move was spoken of, had been that Dor might slip in getting into the boat and upset the bowl, that something might—*must* happen. But she, herself, did not dare to let anything happen, to take any chances; and perhaps Dor realized this, for there seemed nothing that he did not know.

The new room was a little back from the river, in a rookery of a place. It was safer in some ways; but that was balanced by the fact that Dor could not keep a boat there, and had to hire one every night when he wanted to cross the river. True, he found an old man whom he believed to be stanch, but the very thought of it irked him. It seemed a bad omen that he should be driven to trust any one, even so little—for he always took care to land at a place far away from where his work lay.

He brought home a great deal of money, but it soon went, for he was an inveterate gambler. Then Rosa was not working, and this relinquishment of her independence was the final downfall of her pride.

At last there came a time when Dor disappeared, was wiped clean off her world for close on a year. But even then she did not go out to work more than was absolutely necessary. She was afraid to leave the goldfish—afraid, obsessed by the fear that anything might happen to it—that Dor might come back, find it gone, and kill her. Not that she feared death so much as what she knew she would see in his face during the fraction of time before his hand closed round her throat.

Once there was a fire in the crazy tenement, but she saved the fish somehow, and refilled its bowl while women and children were gasping, half-suffocating around her—Rosa, who had once overflowed with sympathy and good nature!

Every day she watered and fed it, buying it the ants' eggs to which it was accustomed out of her own money; all

with a sort of furious resentment—turning her head away, cursing the creature.

There was a nasty, dastardly murder in the city about that time; a jewel merchant—in his own office in broad daylight—hit over the head from behind with a crowbar. It was an amazingly risky thing to do, but even then the man would have got clear if it had not been for an old boatman, who gave him away, turned king's evidence; as it was, very little of the booty was recovered—the rest being probably hidden in the slime at low tide, or that was the general idea. The fellow, who gave his name as Sebastian Ricchi—he said he was of Spanish birth—was condemned to be hanged, and that seemed like the end of it.

But it was not.

The business of setting a man to dance upon air is so well done now that it is difficult to realize how any hitch, excepting the right one, can occur. But in this case something went wrong, or else the man was made differently from other men, for he would not hang, though the drop was adjusted twice over after the first try—and ultimately Ricchi was cut down and taken back to prison.

There was fame for Sebastian Ricchi! The whole world—the world which Rosa knew—went mad over the question as to whether the authorities would or would not have a second try.

Ricchi solved it for himself by escaping from the ward of the prison hospital where he had lain, seemingly as near dead as it is possible for any man to be, though with his spinal cord still intact, and that was something to be thankful for.

The trial took place just before Christmas, and it was early in the new year when they tried to hang Sebastian Ricchi.

At that time the weather was bitterly cold, and yet—for many days—

though Rosa gave it fresh water daily, the fish seemed like to die, as if from heat or suffocation. Its struggles were frantic; as usual, when anything went wrong with it, its golden scales faded to putty tint, every trace of color being confined to one vivid line of red round its head, just at the back of its gills.

Halfway through April Dor came home. He looked bleached, and walked with one shoulder higher than the other, like a man with a stiff neck.

He was very silent, and did not go out much; but he was good to Rosa. All through that spring and summer her days were languorous and sweet as honey. He had hidden a store of money somewhere, and he loaded her with presents, silks and gold chains and ostrich feathers. Her mood regarding such things had completely changed by then, and she sunned herself in the outward, material expressions of his love. You could almost see her bend her back, purring under his touch. Her lips grew red once more, her smooth cheeks filled out. They had moved again, to somewhere near Cherry Gardens Pier this time, into another house overhanging the river, where she lolled at the window, her firm, white arms bare to the elbow, folded upon a plush cushion, her earrings dangling almost to her shoulder.

But it was not to Rosa alone that Dor gave gifts which smacked of thank offerings. Incongruously enough, he hung a rosary round under the rim of the fish's bowl, and bought a little lamp, which he burned in front of it.

They were very quiet. Rosa often wondered what he thought of, sitting hour after hour staring down into the fish's bowl with his hand at the back of his neck.

Early that next spring Dor began to go out and about again. He had grown a beard and looked different, was different, or, rather, more "set" than ever.

But he took pains with himself, combing and trimming his beard, buying himself a new coat—a short, blue pilot with a velvet collar.

One day Rosa smelled scent on his handkerchief.

After that she was like some questing animal. There used to be a black panther in the London Zoo which had to be kept from the sight of the crowd, for if it saw and could not reach them it tore and gnawed itself.

She could not let herself be. She tortured herself with the picture of Dor in the arms of another woman, the thought of how they would mock at her, breaking off their murmured love-making, their kisses, to laugh. She knew every word they would say—knew what they *did* say.

Dor came and went. At first he was worried and engrossed, then triumphant. His step grew lighter, his dark eyes glowed; he had the whole air of a man successfully achieving his purpose and not yet satiated by complete success.

Sitting in the dark, at the close of the sultry day, Rosa would hear him come singing up the stairs.

Directly he got into the room he would light the gas and take a look at the goldfish, humming softly under his breath. Then he would break off his singing just sufficiently to ask for supper, and at it again.

One day he came home with a rose in his buttonhole—a red one—and she took it and threw it on the floor and stamped on it; cursing him, pouring every foul epithet she had ever heard upon him and his light o' love.

But Dor did not seem to mind, only laughed; then as she burst into a passion of weeping, he took her in his arms, still laughing.

And she lay there, tamed and exhausted, though a rich, sickly-sweet perfume hung about the velvet lapel beneath her cheek. That was the shame-

ful part of it—he only had to touch her to tame her.

During this time Dor was never once out all night, though it was often dawn when he reached home. Rosa seldom went to bed before he returned. If she did, driven by some faint revival of her old belief in not showing your bloke how much you cared, she could not rest, but would be up again in an hour; walking the room, lashing herself to a fury, biting the back of her hand—just like the panther.

"If ever he's out after four i' the mornin' I'll do him in—I'll do him in—so help me God! Mark me word—you—something—brute—I'll do him in!"

It was to the fish that she made her vows, pausing in that wild pacing, when she tore around in a sort of furious rage against the very walls of the room which held her—she could have walked for miles and miles, but she had to be in to make certain at what hour Dor did come home.

"Mark me words, you brute, you!" she would shout, leaning close above the gleaming gold creature, which paled toward morning; which seemed as balked by the narrow boundary of the glass bowl as Rosa herself by the four walls.

"If he's ever out after four, so help me God——" She was so sure of what she would do that she was terrified of herself, and of the fish which eyed her unceasingly—or so it seemed.

Then one night he did not return. Midsummer was past, the nights were lengthening. There was a wild wind sweeping up the river with the incoming tide, and a heavy mist, so that the fog horns boomed without ceasing; while the rotten old wooden house rocked and creaked, as though some breath of the sea had got into its joints.

At four o'clock the fish ceased its circuities. As it lay still in the center of the bowl, the water thickened to a

milky tint. It was only by kneeling, peering through the sides with her eyes almost touching the glass, that Rosa could see the creature. It might have been dead save for the ceaseless fanning of its wide gills.

She had got to do what she had got to do. That was the feeling—past all reason—that she had. Over her body she seemed to feel the touch of Dor's long fingers, as that other woman might be feeling them now.

She got up from her knees and took a knife. Then she put her hand into the bowl, with the water surging up over the edge; and taking out the fish, laid it upon the table, and cut off its head.

She did not attempt to hide what she had done, but placed the pieces side by side and left them. Then she took off her stays and shoes and got into bed.

She was conscious of a magnificent sense of pride, of a triumphant and stupendous calm. It was as if she belonged to herself once more.

After she had lain in bed for some little time, flat on her back, with her hands clasped behind her head, she heard the bottom door open and Dor coming up the stairs.

Reaching for the matches, she sat up in bed and lighted the gas, turning it on to flaring. He should see what there was to be seen, and be damned to him!

As he neared the door, she realized that he moved with an odd, squelching sound, which showed that his boots were full of water.

He fumbled for a moment at the door as though his hands were wet and would not grasp the handle firmly. Then he came in.

His clothes hung lank upon him, streaming with water. His shoulders drooped, his hands were straight at his sides, his knees bent forward as though all the bone had been washed out of him. Well, that was all. There was a torn mass of flesh at the back of his

neck—or where his neck ought to have been—and that was all.

Rosa sat bolt upright in bed, stiffened with horror, the palms of her hands pressed hard on the mattress.

The dreadful part of the whole thing lay, not so much in what she saw—though that was dreadful enough in all conscience—as what she felt, was sure of. That the dragged, piteously drooping body was all eyes; that there, without a head, it fixed her with an awful, unwavering glance—as much part of the whole of it as the sense of touch.

For a while the thing stood quite still. Then it moved aside from the still open door, as though to make room for something else which was on its way.

Few sounds are more expressive than that of some rounded object falling downstairs, the regular bump, bump, bump; diminishing in volume as it nears the bottom.

Now there was something bumping *up* the stairs. The sound increased, drew nearer. At each of the two lower landings it ceased for a moment, which was occupied by a slurring sound.

Up to this Rosa had been as rigid as death. But now, as she realized what was following that awful figure, which stood by the door with a strange air of expectation, she gave one wild shriek, flung herself from her bed across the floor—the water streaming from the drowned man above her in-step—and out of the open window.

When the neighbors came running, in response to that cry, which cut through the entire building, they saw a disordered bed and an open window. Apart from that, nothing strange; just a tidy, clean room, without a single footstep showing on the gayly flowered oilcloth

—and a goldfish, with its head cut off lying upon the table.

It happened too late for the morning papers, but it was all in the late editions. The finding of Sebastian Ricchi—the man who had murdered the night watchman, whom they had failed to hang, who had broken out of the prison hospital and never been heard of again.

At that first trial—for surely there was another and a greater awaiting him—he had been given away by an old boatman. Now it seemed that he had seduced the boatman's granddaughter, the one living creature he had belonging to him. The old man received a letter telling him of a meeting between the lovers that very night, and advising him to be there and see for himself.

This letter mentioned no names, but the old man was as obsessed by the idea of Sebastian Ricchi as Rosa had been by Dor and his fish. Perhaps he suspected a plot, but, anyhow, though he obeyed the summons of a "Wellwisher," he had a couple of policemen to go with him, and they would have got their man had it not been that the lovers had chosen the wharf at the edge of Cherry Gardens Pier for their meeting place, and Ricchi saved himself from their hands by a header into the river. Not altogether saved himself, though, for, as ill fortune would have it, the tide, rushing up the river, swept him into the center, where he was caught by the screw of a passing steamer fumbling her way up in the mist; and torn—well, "torn to pieces" was the way they put it. If it had not been for this mischance he might have reached the other side and got away in safety, for he was a fine swimmer. It was just that—for some reason or other—his amazing luck had turned.



by Henri Murger

Author of



'The Cape of Storms'

Donec Gratus

IT has been related how the painter Marcel made the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Musette. United one day by Caprice, who is the mayor of their district, they had imagined that, after the ordinary course of such things, their intimacy could end upon the basis of the same law. But one evening, after a violent quarrel, which decided them to break off instantly and for ever, they found that their hands, meeting in final adieu, would not separate. Fancy, almost without their being conscious of it, had become love. They both admitted it half-laughingly.

"This," said Marcel, "is a very serious matter. How the deuce have we done it?"

"Oh," replied Musette, "we are dun-derheads! We have not taken proper precaution."

"What is up!" inquired Rodolphe, whose rooms now neighbored Marcel's, as he chanced to look in.

"This has happened," said Marcel, pointing to Musette, "she and I have

just made a grand discovery. We are in love with each other. It must have happened while we were asleep."

"Oh! Ah! Asleep. No, I don't think so," said Rodolphe. "But where is the proof that you do love each other? Perhaps you exaggerate the danger."

"Good heavens! No," replied Marcel. "We cannot endure one another."

"And we cannot leave each other," added Musette.

"Then, my children, the matter is clear. Wanting to play to the very end, you have both lost. It is simply my story over again with Mimi. It is a subject for endless discussion. By this system it is that the perpetuity of marriage has become an institution. Unite a yes with a no, and you have a Philemon and Baucis household; your home will be a pendant to mine, and if Schaunard and Phémie are coming here to live, as they threaten, our trio of establishments will form a very agreeable whole."

At this moment Gustave Colline entered. He was informed of the accident which had befallen Musette and Marcel.

"Well, philosopher," said Marcel, "what do you think of it?"

Colline smoothed the nap of the hat which was as good as a roof to him, and murmured, "I was sure of it; love is a game of chance in which there is plenty of excitement. It is not good for man to be alone."

In the evening when Rodolphe came home, he said to Mimi, "There is news; Musette is madly in love with Marcel, and won't leave him."

"Poor girl!" replied Mimi, "and she had such a good appetite."

"And on his side Marcel is smitten with Musette. He adores her 'thirty-six carat,' as that Colline calls it."

"Poor fellow!" said Mimi, "and so jealous as he is."

"Quite true," said Rodolphe. "He and I are pupils of Othello."

A little while after Schaubard and Phémie set up their domesticities close by. From that day forward the other lodgers of the house slept upon such a volcano that at the end of their term they sent the landlord notice to quit.

Few days passed, in fact, on which a storm did not burst in one or other of the establishments. Now it was Mimi and Rodolphe, who, having exhausted their speaking powers, explained the rest by any household projectiles chancing to be at hand. Most frequently it was Schaubard, who emphasized his remarks to the melancholy Phémie with the end of a cane. As for Marcel and Musette, their discussions were conducted in the silence of closed doors; they, at all events, took the precaution of shutting their doors and windows.

If by chance peace did reign in the several establishments, the other lodgers of the place did not find their suffer-

ings lessened by the transient concord. The indiscretions of the partition walls permitted all the secrets of the Bohemian household management to penetrate them, initiating them in spite of themselves into its mysteries; and more than one neighbor preferred a *casus belli* to ratifications of treaties of peace.

It was, in fact, a singular existence which the Bohemians led for the next six months. The most loyal fraternity was observed by them. All was in common, and scrupulously shared, good or ill as fortune might send.

There were certain days of magnificence, upon which none of them went down into the street without gloves; red-letter occasions, when they dined all day. There were other times when they went almost without boots or shoes, Lenten days these, when after going breakfastless, they did not dine together, or, at all events, only succeeded by economical combinations in creating one of those repasts at which plates and dishes, as Mimi said, "took a holiday."

But strange to say that in this society, which included, at all events, three young and pretty women, no discord ever broke out among the men. They bent often to the most futile caprices of their mistresses, but not one of them would have hesitated between the girl and the friend.

Love is the child of spontaneity. It is an improvisation. Friendship, on the contrary, is built up so to speak of a sentiment that moves with circumspection; it is the egoism of the mind, while love is the egoism of the heart.

The Bohemians had known one another for six years. This long period, passed in daily intimacy without altering the strongly defined individuality of each one of them, had bound them in an accordance of ideas and a unity which they would have vainly sought elsewhere. They had their own manners and customs and modes of expression,

of which strangers would not have known where to find the key. Those who did not properly know them called their free-going ways cynicism. It was, in fact, simply frankness. Their spirits, restive against all constraint, hated the false and held the commonplace in contempt. Accused of exaggerated vanities, they retorted by proudly proclaiming the program of their ambition, and having the consciousness of their worth, they did not abuse it.

During the many years that they had walked together in the same paths they had often of necessity been placed in rivalry; but they had never broken their ties, and had passed over without heeding personal questions of self-respect every time that attempts had been made to disunite them. They, moreover, estimated exactly their own individual value; and pride, which is the antidote of envy, protected them from all petty professional jealousies.

After six months, however, of this life in common, an epidemic of divorce suddenly broke out among them. Schaunard inaugurated proceedings. One day he happened to notice that Phémie Teinturière had one knee better made than the other, and as in the matter of sculpture he was an austere purist, he dismissed Phémie, making her a present of the cane with which he had been accustomed to emphasize his frequent observations, and then he went to live with a relative who offered him a home gratis.

A fortnight after, Mimi left Rodolphe to take her place in the carriage of young Viscount Paul, formerly Carolus Barbemuche's pupil, who had promised her gowns as brilliant as the sun.

After Mimi it was Musette who cleared off and rejoined with great state the aristocratic ranks of the gallant Society which she had quitted to follow Marcel.

This separation took place without quarrel, or disturbance, or premeditation. Born of a caprice which grew into love, another caprice severed the connection.

One evening in carnival time, at the opera masked ball, whither she had gone with Marcel, Musette had for a vis-à-vis a young man who had formerly paid her attentions. They recognized each other, and while dancing exchanged a few words together. Without perhaps intending it, while she was telling the young man of her present way of life, she allowed some regrets for the old life to pass her lips. When the quadrille finished, Musette made a mistake, and instead of giving her hand to Marcel her partner, she took the hand of her vis-à-vis, who led her away into the crowd and disappeared.

Marcel, not a little uneasy, sought for her. After about an hour he found her leaning on the young man's arm; she was leaving the opera coffee-room singing snatches of songs. At sight of Marcel, who was standing in a corner with crossed arms, she waved him adieu, calling, "I am coming back."

"That is to say, 'Don't wait for me,'" translated Marcel. He was jealous, but he was logical, and knew Musette, therefore he did not wait for her; he returned home with his heart big and an empty stomach. He sought in the cupboard for possible leavings—for a supper. He found a morsel of granitelike bread and the skeleton of a sour hering.

"I can't contend against truffles," thought he. "At all events, Musette will have had supper." And after passing the corner of his handkerchief across his eyes under pretense of wiping his mouth, he went to bed.

Two days later Musette awoke in a rose-colored boudoir, a blue brougham waited at her door, and all the fairies in the world—requisitioned in her service—brought their marvels to her feet.

Musette was charming, and her early youth seemed to renew itself in this setting of elegancies. So she recommenced the old life, attended all the fêtes, and regained her celebrity. She was talked of everywhere—in the byways of the Exchange and even in the parliamentary buffets. As for her new lover, Monsieur Alexis, he was an agreeable young man. Often he complained to Musette that she seemed a little careless and indifferent when he spoke to her of his love. Then Musette would gaze at him smilingly, pat his hands, and say:

"What is it you want, dearest? I stopped six months with a man who fed me on salad and soup, without butter, who dressed me in a print gown, and took me to the Odéon a great deal because he was not rich. As love costs nothing, and I was madly in love with this creature, we wasted a considerable amount of love, and there are only a few crumbs of it left. Pick them up. I don't hinder you. For the rest, I have not deceived you; and if ribbons were not so dear I should still be with my painter. As to my heart, since a corset of eighty francs covers it, I cannot hear it beat very loudly, and I am almost afraid I must have left it in one of Marcel's drawers."

The disappearance of the three Bohemian households was the occasion of a fête in the house which had contained them. In token of his satisfaction the landlord gave a grand dinner and the lodgers illuminated their windows.

Rodolphe and Marcel now lived together. Each of them had selected a new divinity, whose names they were not even precisely certain of. Sometimes they talked of Mimi or of Musette, and it would suffice as a theme for the whole evening. They would recall their memories of the old life, and Musette's songs and Mimi's songs, and the sleepless nights, and the idle mornings, and the dream dinners.

One after the other they would recall, during these chats, those memories of the hours that had fled forever, and they would usually end up by saying that, after all, they were glad to be together alone again with their feet on the fender, stirring the winter logs, smoking their pipes, and to have each of them a pretext for gossiping and saying aloud to the other what each only said in a whisper to himself when he was alone—that they had greatly loved those creatures who had left them, taking with them the shreds of their youth, and it might be that they loved them still.

One evening, as he was crossing the boulevard, Marcel saw a young woman a little distance off, who, as she descended from a cab, displayed an ankle that was the perfection of form and grace. The driver himself was fascinated with his fare.

"Good heavens!" said Marcel, "that is a fine ankle. I should like to offer my arm. Let me see—how can I manage it? That's my business: it seems quite strange."

"Excuse me, madame," he said, approaching the unknown, whose face he had not as yet been able to catch a glimpse of, "you have not by chance found my handkerchief?"

"Yes, monsieur," replied the young lady, "here it is." And she put into Marcel's hand a handkerchief she held.

The artist staggered with astonishment.

But suddenly a burst of laughter right in his face restored him to himself, for in the joyous fanfare he recognized the tone of his old love.

It was Musette.

"Ah!" cried she, "Monsieur Marcel is looking for adventures. What do you think of this one—eh? It doesn't lack drollery."

"I find it supportable," said Marcel.

"What are you doing so late in this part of the world?" asked Musette.

"I am going into this tomb," replied the artist, pointing to a little theater of which he had the entrée.

"For the love of Art?"

"No, for love of Laure. Now," said Marcel to himself, "that is a pretty little play upon words of double meaning. I will sell it to Colline. He is making a collection of them."

"Who is Laure?" asked Musette, whose looks sparkled notes of interrogation.

Marcel continued his disagreeable pleasantries.

"I am pursuing a chimera who plays ingénues in this obscure place," and with a wave of his hand he indicated a dancer's dress.

"You are very lively this evening," said Musette.

"And you very curious," said Marcel.

"Speak lower. Everybody will hear us, and they will take us for lovers quarreling."

"It wouldn't be the first time such a thing had happened to us," said Marcel.

Musette caught provocation in this phrase, and replied quickly:

"And perhaps it won't be the last—eh?"

The meaning was obvious; it hissed like a bullet into Marcel's ear.

"Splendors of heaven!" said he, gazing up at the stars, "you are witnesses that it is not I who struck the first blow. My cuirass—quick!"

The firing had begun.

There was nothing more to be done than to find a convenient point of union for these two imaginations which had awakened so quickly.

As they went along Musette looked at Marcel, and Marcel looked at Musette. They did not speak, but their eyes—those ambassadors of the heart—often met. At the end of a quarter of an hour of diplomacy this congress of

looks had tacitly arranged the matter. It only remained to ratify it.

The interrupted conversation was renewed.

"Frankly," said Musette to Marcel, "where were you going just now?"

"I have told you. I was going to Laure."

"Is she pretty?"

"Her mouth is a nest of smiles."

"I understand," said Musette.

"But yourself," said Marcel, "whence come you on the wings of this cab?"

"I came from taking Alexis to the railway. He is going on a tour with his family."

"What sort of a fellow is Alexis?"

In her turn Musette drew a taking portrait of her new lover. All the way they went Marcel and Musette continued in the open street to play this comedy of going back to the old love.

In the same naïve key, now railing, now tender, they recited once more, strophe by strophe, the immortal ode in which Horace and Lydia extol so gracefully the delights of their renewed loves, and finish by adding a postscript to their former loves. As it happened, they reached the corner of the street just as a strong patrol tramped round it.

Musette manufactured a little terrified attitude, and clinging to Marcel's arm, she cried:

"Oh, good heavens! Look! The troops are coming! There is going to be another revolution. We must save ourselves. I am terribly frightened. Take me back!"

"But where are we going?" asked Marcel.

"Home with me," said Musette. "You will see how pretty it is. I will give you some supper, and we will talk politics."

"No," said Marcel, thinking of Monsieur Alexis, "I will not go to your house, in spite of supper. I don't like

drinking my wine out of other people's glasses."

Musette stood silent until this refusal. Then through the mists of memory she saw the poor artist's mean dwelling, for Marcel had not become a millionaire. And she had an idea, and profiting by the march past of another patrol, she manifested renewed terror.

"They are going to fight!" she cried. "I can never go back. Marcel, dear friend, take me to a friend of mine who *should* be living near your house."

As they crossed the Pont Neuf Musette burst out into a shout of laughter.

"What is it?" asked Marcel.

"Nothing," said Musette. "I remember now that my friend has gone away from this part. She lives in the Batignolles quarter."

Seeing Marcel and Musette arrive arm in arm caused Rodolphe no astonishment. "Half-buried loves always end thus," he said.



ANY wife can make her husband's life a burden to him, if she will conscientiously lay herself out to do so.—*Henry Harland*.



BEING asked whether it was better to marry or not, he replied: "Whichever you do, you will repent it."—*Diogenes Laertius*.



A ROMAN divorced from his wife, being highly blamed by his friends, who demanded: "Was she not chaste? Was she not fair? Was she not fruitful?" holding out his shoe, asked them whether it was not new and well-made. "Yet," added he, "none of you can tell where it pinches me."—*Plutarch*.



MEN often marry in hasty recklessness, and repent afterward all their lives.—*Molière*.



Benedick: I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humor? No! The world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.—*Shakespeare*.



Is not marriage an open question when it is alleged, from the beginning of the world, that such as are in the institution wish to get out, and such as are out wish to get in?—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*.



OUR hours in love have wings; in absence, crutches.—*Colley Cibber*.



ABSENCE diminishes little passions and kindles great ones, as the wind extinguishes candles and fans a fire.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

by
Thomas Burke

Author of

"The Cue"



Beryl, The Croucher, and the Rest of England

IT is an episode in the life and death of Beryl Hermione Maud Chudder and of "Croucher" Stumpley, and it is told because it is beautiful, and because the rest of England arose in its fat, satin'd, Bayswater wrath, and called it beastly. Horrid things have to be told with it, as with all tales of Limehouse; but hear the story, if you will, and be gentle, be pitiful.

The Croucher, known also as the "Prize Packet" and the "Panther," was only a boy, just nineteen; and when he quitted the ring one Saturday night at Netherlands, after a heavy and fast fifteen rounds, in which only the gong had saved his opponent from the knock-out, it was with a free mind, careless of the future, joyful in the present. He had no fight in view for another two months; therefore he could cut loose a bit, for, in wine or want, he was always gay. There had, then, been drinks after the fight—several; but it was the last that did the trick—an overripe gin. It had made him ill, and he had slouched away from the boys to be ill quietly.

Now he wanted something to pull him together again, for he thought—as one does think after three or four—that five or six might do the trick; so behold him, at ten thirty on this Saturday night, loafing along East India Dock Road, and turning into Pennyfields. From Pennyfields he drifted over West India Dock Road, passed a house where a window seemed deliberately to wink at him, and so swung into that Causeway where the cold fatalism of the Orient meets the wistful dubiety of the West. Here he was known and popular with the Chin-kies, for he was a quiet lad, with nothing of bombast, and liked to talk with them. Besides, he was famous. He had knocked out "Nobby" Keeks, the Limehouse Wonder, and had once had "Seaman" Hunks in serious difficulties for ten rounds, though matched above his weight; and altogether was regarded as a likely investment by the gang that backed him.

In the Causeway all was secrecy and half tones. The winter's day had died in a wrath of flame and cloud, and now

pin points of light pricked the curtain of mist. The shuttered gloom of the quarter showed strangely menacing. Every whispering house seemed an abode of dread things. Every window seemed filled with frightful eyes. Every corner, half lit by the bleak light of a naked gas jet, seemed to harbor unholy things, and a sense of danger hung on every step. The Causeway was just a fog of yellow faces and labial murmurings.

The Croucher entered the little bar at the corner. The company was poor: two bashful Chinkies and two dock drunks. As he strode in, one of the drunks was talking in tones five sizes larger than life. The landlord was maintaining his reputation for *suaviter in modo* by informing him at intervals that he was a perfect bloody nuisance to any respectable house, and the sooner he drank up and cleared and never came near his bar again, the better; while his pal attended to the *fortiter in re* by prodding him repeatedly over the kidneys.

"Well, if yer want one, have one, and shut up about it."

"Aw right. I'll give ten bob for one to-night—there!" And with a proud hand he jumped a half sovereign on the table and caught it.

The Croucher had a brandy, and followed the conversation without listening. He was, as he said, off color. Bad-tempered about everything, like, and didn't know why. Everything was all *right*. But— Well, he just felt like that. He wanted something to happen. Something new. His thoughts swam away like roving fish, and came back suddenly, as the roaring of the two drunks dropped. It was one of the Chinks who was talking now, in a whisper:

"Ah said get you one for twelve shillings."

The drunk thrust up a distorted jaw and stared at him. The stare was meant

to be strong and piercing; it was merely idiotic.

"What's she like?"

"Dark. Heap plitty."

"Give you ten bob."

"No. Twelve shillings. Nice gel."

"Where's she come from? How long you had her?"

Now the Croucher pricked up his ears and butted in. He had an idea. Here was something that might amuse him for a bit, and take off that sickish feeling. A nice girl. Good fun. Yes, rather. He had wanted something fresh, some kind of excitement to stir things up a bit. He felt better already.

"'Ere, Chinky," he called. "Leave that blasted drunk and come over here. Got something for yeh."

The blasted drunk got up, by a grip on the Chink's coat tail, and mentioned that he'd show kids whether they could insult a perfly respectable sailor by— He then saw that the kid was the Croucher, and his mate pulled him back, and he slid off the seat and was no more heard of.

"Look here, Chinky," murmured Croucher, "I'll— What you going to have? Right-o. Two brandies, quick! Is this all right, this gel?"

"Sh! Les. Always all light with Wing Foo, eh?"

"Well, listen. I'm on to that. See?" Wing Foo slid aside, and conferred with his fat yellow friend.

"All light," he agreed, returning to the Croucher. "You come 'long now, and see her."

The three slid into the Causeway together. The air was busy with the wailing of a Chinese fiddle. All about them was gloom; twilight shops; snatches of honey talk; fusty smells; bits of traffic; seamen singing. They crossed the road, slipped Pennyfields, and came to the house set with its back to the corner whose single window had winked at the Croucher a few minutes past.

The door yielded at a push, and they

entered the main room, lit by a forlorn candle. The elder Chink extended a flat hand. The Croucher filled it with thirty pieces of silver and the bargain was made. One of them disappeared, and a moment or so later the purchase appeared at the foot of the stairs which led from the fireplace. On seeing the Croucher her color grew, and she gave a quick gasp of surprise which was unnoticed by the Chinks. But the Croucher caught it.

Beryl Hermione Maud was dark and just fourteen; a neat little figure, not very tall for her age, but strangely intuitive, overripe, one might say. Morally, she had grown too fast. Though only fourteen years were marked in the swift lines of her form, in her face were all the wisdom and all the tears of the ages. She was one of those precocities which abound in this region. She had a genius for life, for divining its mysteries, where others wait on long years of experience. Her father had called her several unprintable names because she stayed out late and lengthened her skirts, and he threatened to wallop her if she didn't behave herself. She then made the mistake of assuming that this new dignity afforded her the protection of maturity, and proceeded to further liberties. Her father made haste to shake her belief in this idea, and to remind her that she was only fourteen, by turning up those lengthened skirts and giving her the spanking she deserved. This so exasperated her that she ran away from Tidal Basin, and here she was with the yellow men.

She really was a dainty production. Not beautiful in the Greek sense, for there is nothing more tedious than the Greek idea of beauty and proportion. Beryl Hermione Maud's beauty was more interesting; indefinite, wayward. The features were irregular, but there was some quality in the face that called you back. To look into it was to look into the solemn deeps of a cathedral.

Only the lips held any touch of grossness. Her skin was translucent and fine. Her thick loaded curls tumbled to her neck. Her glances were steady and reticent, and in her movements was the shy dignity of the child.

The Croucher was fairly drunk by this time, but he was sober enough to look at her and discover that she was desirable, and had great joy to give to men. He swayed across to her, and put his steely arms about her white neck. She greeted him with a smile, and remained limp and passive under his embrace, her face lifted, expectant. A shudder ran about her of delight, fear, and wonder. He was about to seal the bargain with an unholy kiss when through the hush of the hour came the crack of a revolver shot.

All started. A moment later came a great shout, and then a babble. There was chorus of many feet. The noise swelled to a broad roar, the feet came faster.

Smack! came a stone at the window, and a trickling of broken glass. The Croucher swung away from Beryl Hermione Maud and looked out. A man, his whole body insane with fear, was running to the house; behind him was a nightmare of pursuers. Five seconds, and he was at the door. Without knowing why, the Croucher pulled it open. The man collapsed in the little room. The Croucher shut the door.

"Good Gawd, the ol' man!"

"Let yer old dad in, boy! Gimme a chance! Oh, Gawd. They nearly 'ad me. I done a murder. Just 'ad time to run. Old Borden told me you'd gone with the Chinks. 'Elp me, boy, 'elp me. Don't let 'em git me. They'll 'ang me. 'Ang me. They're coming!" His voice rose to a scream. "Don't go back on me. Gimme a chance to hide. Keep 'em back while I get wind. I can't run no more. Go out, and 'it 'em, boy. You can. Stand by yer dad!"

But the Croucher was not wanting

these appeals. Already he had dragged the old man up, and sat him in a chair. Now there was a fury of police whistles spurting into the night like water on a fire. The anger of the streets came to them in throbbing blasts. The Croucher slipped to the window. From under his coat he drew a Smith-Wesson. The old man stretched a stupid hand.

"D-d-d-don't! Don't shoot 'em. Fight 'em!"

"Blast you—and shut up!" snapped the Croucher. "It's all right. It'll just stop 'em. It's blanks."

He raised the gun to the broken pane and fired, twice. It did stop 'em. It wasn't blank. It was ball.

The leading officer went down and out. The next man took his bullet in the thigh. Both tumbled ridiculously, and the crowd behind gyrated on them like a bioscope "comic." Those who were able sorted themselves out and ran zealously home. The others remained to struggle and to pray.

"Bloody fool!" cried the old man. "You done it now. We both done a murder now. Gawd 'elp us!"

"Damn good job!"

Stumpley, the elder, collapsed in his chair again, his face white and damp with sweat. The Chinks waited, as ever, impassive. The Croucher stood out, alert, commanding.

"Bolt the door," said the Croucher.

"Clamp the windows," said the Croucher.

"Light the lamp," said the Croucher.

The door was bolted, the windows clamped, the lamp lit. The four men regarded one another. Behind them, in the shaking shadow, stood Beryl Hermione Maud. Then the Croucher saw her.

"Send the girl upstairs," he said; and she went.

It was a curious situation. The Chinks didn't give a damn either way. They were all in for a picnic now—or something worse than a picnic—if there

is anything worse. Life or death—it was all one to them. The old man had killed some one; he would be hanged. The boy had killed someone; he would be hanged. They would be charged with harboring, and facts about the little girl, and about other business of theirs would come out. So, as there would be trouble anyway, they were quite prepared to take what came. Then there was the old man, palsied with fright, hoping, anticipating, hysterical and inarticulate. Then there was the Croucher, in love with life, but game enough to play his part and keep his funk locked tightly inside him. Finally there was the girl, who—but what she felt is but a matter for conjecture. So far, she had shown about as much emotion as any girl of her age shows when the music teacher arrives. The others took a clear attitude on the situation. She was a dark horse. Indeed, she might just as well not have been there, and, so far as the men were concerned, she was not. She was simply forgotten.

They sent her upstairs and left her, while they argued and fought and barricaded. But she must have thought hard and lived many hard years during those two days of the Swatow Street siege, when she waited in the upper room, forlorn and helpless.

Presently one of the Chinks retired and came back with two revolvers and a small tin box.

"Guns," he said simply.

"Gimme a shot o' dope," slobbered the old man. "Gimme a jolt, Chinky."

The Croucher stared at the guns.

"Oh. Going to 'ave a run for yer money, old cock? Well, we're all in, now. Only a matter of time. They're bound to win in the end. Tip out the bunce, old sport. Ball, all the time. If they're going to take me alive, they'll lose half a dozen of their boys first. They're all round the back now. I 'eard 'em. We can't get out. It's rope for me

and dad. And it's a stretch for you two. Round to the back, you Chinky. Keep the window and the door. Good job I'm drunk. You—up to the back window. Watch for ladders. We'll show 'em something."

He did. You will recall the affair. How the police surrounded that little Fort Chabrol. How the deadly aim of the half drunk Croucher and the cold Chinkies got home on the Metropolitan Police Force again and again. How the Croucher worked the front of the house, which faces the whole length of the street, and how the Chinkies took the back and the roof. How the police, in their helplessness against such fatalistic defiance of their authority, appealed to government, and how the government sent down a detachment of the Guards. You will recall how, in the great contest of four men and a girl *vs.* the Rest of England, it was the Rest of England that went down. The overwhelming minority quietly laughed at them. Of course, you cannot kill an English institution with ridicule, for ridicule presupposes a sense of proportion in the thing ridiculed; but there was another way by which the lonely five put the rest of England to confusion.

It was all very wicked. Murder had been done. It is impossible to justify the situation in any way. In Bayswater and all other haunts of unbridled chastity the men and the girl were tortured, burned alive, stewed in oil, and submitted to every conceivable pain and penalty for their saucy effrontery. Yet somehow, there was a touch about the whole thing, this spectacle of four men defying the whole law and order of the greatest country in the world, that thrilled every man with any devil in him.

It thrilled the Croucher. The theatricality of it appealed irresistibly to him. Just then, he lived gloriously. While old Stumpley sniveled and convulsed, he and his Chinks put up a splendid fight. Through a little air hole of the shut-

tered window Croucher wrought his will on all invaders, and when the Guards erected their barricade at the end of the street he roared.

Zpt! Zpt! Zpt! Their rifles spat vicious death, and tinkles of glass and plaster announced the coming of the bullets. But, by the irony of things, the defenders remained untouched.

It was on the night of the second day that the Croucher began to be tired, and to feel that things must be ended. He and the Chinks had accepted the situation, and had kicked old man Stumpley into a corner. Then they had taken turns in watching and sleeping. The rest of England had kept up a resultory *plopety-plop-plop* at their blockhouse, bringing down bits of plaster and woodwork and other defenseless things. But it could not go on forever; and two days of siege, with constant gripping of a gun, is too much for the nerves, even when you know that death is at the end of it. He did not fancy walking out and being shot down, though this is what the old man wished to do; in fact they had had to hold him down in his chair that very morning to prevent him. He did not fancy the inglorious death of a self-directed bullet; and he certainly was not going to a mute surrender and the farce of an Old Bailey trial. He asked for something larger, something with more—

He then discovered that his thoughts were running in the same track as on the night that began the trouble, and association of ideas at once brought the girl to his mind. Gawd! Here he was going out, and he hadn't had his time, his damfinold time that he had promised himself. After all, he might as well have his penn'orth. He'd done murder, which was the worst thing you could do. So he might just as well get some fun out of lesser offenses. What-o! It happened to be his turn to watch; but he might just as well have company for

the watch; and, anyway, there was nothing to watch for. There, before them, was the whole of English civilization, holding back in fear of four men with a large supply of cartridges. England hoped to starve them into surrender so that it could hang them comfortably; that much of their tactics he had divined. So—on with the dance! And then—Ta-ta!

He slipped upstairs to the room where they had locked Beryl Hermione Maud, lest she might make trouble. He unlocked the door and entered.

It is not definitely known what happened at that interview. He was there some while, and, when he came down, he came down, not gay and light-hearted, as he had gone, but morose, changed. Something in his face, in his manner, had altered. It was as though he had tightened up. He moved about as a man pondering on something which he is near to solving. The subject of his pondering was Beryl Hermione Maud. For this had happened—in those few full moments he had awakened to the meaning of love.

When he awoke in the later morning, after relief by Wing Foo, he learned that his old dad was lying in the roadway just outside. He had dashed out before either could stop him, and had gone down to half a dozen shots.

That settled it. They might as well finish their cartridges and then finish the whole thing. They might just as well——"

What the hell was that coming downstairs? Smell it? Burning—eh? Smoke—look at it! Gawd!

The Croucher leaped upstairs.

He leaped upstairs to Beryl Hermione Maud. But the smoke came from her room. He roared at the door and dashed upon it. It swung open. Flame alone held it. She was gone. Then he turned, and saw her on the narrow landing, choking and blinking through a cloud of smoke, as in a dream.

"What the—— Come outer that!" he yelled, and grabbed her sleeve. "Quick—it'll be on us in a minute." He shoved her before him to the stairs, but she drew back. "Who done it?" he gasped. "No—no. Stop. I done it. There was some paraffin in the cupboard there. And some matches. I started the wall where the paper was loose. It'll be through in a jiffy. No, I ain't going down."

"What the devil—— What the—— Don' be a fool. You can get out. I'll come wiv yer. Quick—it's catching the stairs!"

There they stood in the golden haze, while tongues of flame lisped wickedly about them. The heat was insufferable, the smoke asphyxiating. Suddenly, through the crackling of wood, came a revolver shot. The Croucher leaned over the crazy banister. Wing Foo had found honorable death.

Beryl Hermione Maud softly touched his arm.

"Come in here. This room. It'll get here last." Something in her voice, her gesture, struck him silly. He couldn't have commanded at that moment. He obeyed.

When in the little room, she shut the door, and snakes of smoke crawled under it. Then she stepped quietly to him, put her hands about his face, and kissed him.

There, virtually, the story ends, though much happened between them before their course was run. There was talk, curious talk, the talk of a woman of thirty to the man of her life, monstrous to hear from a child to a boy of nineteen. There were embraces, garrulous silences, kisses, fears and tremblings. In those moments the Croucher awoke to a sense of the bigness of things. He became enveloped in something—a kind of—well, the situation and—oh, everything. The murder, the siege, all London waiting for him, and

that sort of thing. It gave him a new emotion; he felt proud and clean all through. He felt, in his own phrase, like as though he was going to find something he'd been hunting for for years and forgotten.

One would like to know more, perhaps, for it might help us to live, and teach us something of pity. But it is not to be known; and, after all, these were the little moments of their lives, sacred to themselves. One can conjecture what passed—the terribly inspired things that were said, the ridiculously tragic things that were done. One guesses that the Croucher stood mazed and dumb and blustering with gesture as Beryl stretched impassioned hands to him and screamed that she loved him, had loved him for years, as he went conquering about Limehouse, and that she had fired the house that they might die together.

And one knows what happened in the last three minutes, for the wide window fell, and those below saw clearly. The front of the house was a mouth of flame. The troops and police closed in. A fire engine jangled insanely at the end of Peking Street. People shouted. People screamed. And they heard Beryl Hermione Maud speak.

"Open the door. It'll be over quicker. Kiss me, Croucher."

They saw the Croucher open the door and spring again to her side, as an octopus of fire writhed upon them. A police officer yelled obscure advice. A fireman dashed forward and grew suddenly frantic, for though everything was at hand, nothing could be done. The nearest hydrant was many yards away, and the engine had to make a circuit. Even the pressmen were momentarily awed.

Beryl flung furious arms about her boy, and again was heard to speak.

"You afraid?"

"Wiv you? Gawd Almighty, no! But — oh — you — young — wonderful — ought to live. 'Tain't fair. It's bloody. You ain't had your time—and you ain't done nothing wrong. I deserve what I got, but—— Steady—it's coming now."

They saw him pull her back on his arm. They saw him put a large hand over her mouth and drag her where the smoke rolled.

"Easy—hoses!"

"Stir up, damyeh. Lively, there."

"Finished with engine."

"Stand clear, dammit, stand clear. Salvage up."

"Take report, Simpson. Smart now. Two bodies——"

"Oh, dammit, do stand clear!"



SURELY love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the market place. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in a balance for gold.—*Oscar Wilde.*



LOVE is like youth for hiding faults and setting forth merits.—*Frank Harris.*



You philosophers who go searching for the meaning of life, thinkers reading so sadly, and, let us hope, so wrongly, the riddle of the world, life has but one meaning, the riddle but one answer—which is Love.—*Richard Le Gallienne.*

New to the pages of this magazine, Max Brand, most celebrated writer of Western stories, needs no introduction to the fiction-reading public of the world. Then begin now, Max Brand's latest, and in his opinion and that of those who have had the privilege of reading the manuscript, his best.

Comanche

By

Max Brand

CHAPTER I

A MAN OF STEEL.

THERE was just enough current sliding down the black face of the East River to keep a bow wave whispering about the prow of the *Nancy Lou*. The night was still, and close, and the two men on the deck were soothed by the cool lapping of the water. There was peace on the river such as could not be found in the town. The humming voice of Manhattan never died away, and Brooklyn murmured behind them, but these sounds were far away. Closer and more disturbing were the occasional tugs which went grinding by between them and Blackwell's Island; and now a Boston

passenger ship, a vision of light and shadow, went by with deeply singing engines. However, on the whole the river was very still, and there was only a background of sound from the cities.

Upon the broad poop of the little



A Story of Men - and a Dog



The rescued man lay at full length, while at his head Comanche sat, his legs trembling with weariness, but his strength and ferocity rapidly returning.

yacht sat two men with a bottle of chilled wine, and cigars to pass the warmth of the evening until the night coolness should begin. They sat at ease, rarely stirring, rarely even speaking, and then in half sentences. But the dog which was chained close to the hatch was constantly on the move. Sometimes he strained toward the side of the boat as far as his chain would allow. Sometimes he scratched restlessly at the deck. Again, he lifted a massive head with a bristling ruff of fur around his neck and two short,

pointed ears—very like the head of a wolf—and from his throat there issued a deep, wild cry that went ringing across the river.

"Stop him!" said David Apperley, the younger of the two. "Stop him, Andrew. It curdles my blood to hear him!"

"Let Comanche sing." The older brother chuckled. "The poor devil has had no fun since the day I caught him."

"Was that fun for him?"

"He chewed up seven out of my twelve dogs; of course it was fun for him."

"Seven out of twelve! What sort of mangy mongrels did you use to chase him?"

"I'll tell you what they were. Big devils. Old, hardened wolfhounds. Dash of greyhound for speed; dash of mastiff for nerve and jaw power. Two or three of them could handle almost any wolf. But they couldn't handle Comanche. It was a grand mêlée to watch, I can tell you! I was glad when we got the lariats on him. Gad, Dave, he slashed two of those lariats in two as cleanly as though those white teeth of his were a sharp sword!"

"Maybe the rope was old."

"Rope? Rawhide, Dave. Like flexible steel. But those teeth are chilled steel, too! Stop it, Comanche!"

He spoke in the midst of another howl with which the whole body of the big wolf dog was quivering. The effect of his voice was to stop the howl short. Comanche leaped at the speaker until the chain checked him. Then, straining against the broad collar, his teeth snapping, and his eyes green with devilish hatred, he strove to get at his owner.

"Pretty boy, isn't he?" asked Andrew Apperley, leaning forward to watch.

"One of these days, he'll break that rusty chain. And he'll about finish you, Andy."

The other nodded.

"I'll change that chain to-morrow."

"Change the wolf, rather. Larkin has given him up. You promised me if Larkin couldn't train the beast, you'd give up that four-footed murderer. Larkin can handle tigers and panthers, but he admits that he can do nothing with this brute."

"He's rather a bad dog," said the elder brother, nodding. "But suppose that one day I learn the key to his heart. Suppose that he grows to love me as much as he hates me and all men, just now?"

"And what of it, Andrew? Even supposing that you could do what no man could do?"

"What of it? He would be the best bodyguard in the world. And we need bodyguards, out West. I have twenty rustlers who'd be happy fellows if they could sink a bullet between my shoulders. A dog like this——"

"Dog? Confound it, Andrew, he has 'wolf' written all over him!"

"Look at him again. Buffalo wolves are lower and narrower in the hind-quarters. And he's splashed with brown. Besides, his whole pelt is finer than a lobo's. And most of all, when I weighed him—though he was thinner, even, than he is now—he tipped the scales at a hundred and fifty pounds. Timber wolves don't grow to that size. No, Dave, there's dog in him. St. Bernard, perhaps."

"I won't argue with you," grumbled David Apperley. "I won't argue with you. You keep waiting for the dog instincts to wake up in him, but dogs don't only howl. They bark, and then whine. This beast can only howl and snarl."

"I admit that," said the owner. "But you can't budge me, Dave. I'll never give him up till I find a man who's a better master for him than I am."

David leaned back in his chair, muttering.

"I won't ask you to explain," he said. "Every man has weak spots. And be-

sides, to own a wolf is rather spectacular."

"Don't be nasty about it. As a matter of fact, I don't think about that. But he fills my mind's eye. He's a picture that I like to have in front of me as often as I can. Because he's a hero, Dave. Ah, man, if you'd seen him slash his way through that dog pack of mine, you would have loved him! I covered him with my rifle. He knew well enough that that was the finish of him, but instead of slinking away with his tail between his legs, he lifted his head and looked me in the eye as brave as you please, and dared me to do my worst. I couldn't kill him then. I can't kill him now, and he'll go back with me to my own country—"

"Your own country?" echoed Dave coldly.

A little silence fell between them. The Apperleys were of an old

family and a good one, and they had been for many generations in New York, growing greater and richer as the city grew. But Andrew had tried his fortunes in the West. An accidental hunting trip showed the country to him, and he had remained in it ever since. This Eastern trip of his was merely to induce his younger brother to come to the new region with him, but to David there was a species of treason in abandoning New York, and he looked upon a shift in the family seat very much as he would have looked upon changing his citizenship. It was a sore topic which had caused many a bitter discussion between them. And so they fell silent.

"The long and short of it," said David at last, "is that you're an enthusiast, old fellow. You believe in that country because you've grown rich there."

"Not a bit! I believe in that country, because it's a country worthy of belief!"

"Half an ounce of culture to the square league!"

"Perhaps not that much. But culture is a luxury, not a necessity to me. If you have the same blood in you, you'll agree with me! However, I'm not trying

to persuade you to come West with me, any more than I can persuade you to believe that Comanche is not pure wolf!"

David laughed a little.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said he. "I'll give you my word to go West with you to your ranch and try to like the wild life there, the instant that I see

any man brave enough to put his hand on the head of Comanche—while he's still unmuzzled!"

Once more the silence fell between them. Comanche grew quieter. But now there was a sudden outbreak of clamor from the big square-shouldered building on Blackwell's Island. They knew it was the prison.

A dozen repeating rifles seemed to be at work.

They could hear distant voices calling orders and shouting answers. Then the broad bright eye of a searchlight began to twist back and forth across the black surface of the East River.

"Some one has escaped," said An-



"Single" Jack Deems.

drew Apperley. "Some poor devil has made a break for it, and he's away, by this time! There goes one of the guard boats!"

They saw a long, shadowy hull splitting the water. A shower of sparks rose from the chimney of the speed boat, and a white wake glistened behind it.

"They've got enough equipment to make it hot for the poor rat," said David, as he and his brother stood together at the side of the little yacht. "Isn't that a Gatling gun forward?"

"That's it, and another of them at the rear."

"And they can shoot faster and straighter than even your Western desperadoes, eh?"

"I don't know," answered Andrew calmly. "I've seen a man fan two Colts so fast that there was just one blur of reports from the beginning to the end! Hello, have they got him?"

The guard boat had veered sharply around and cut up against the current of the tide, throwing a sharp thin bow wave high on each side. They could see the uniformed guards with glistening guns in hand crowding onto the prow of the speed boat.

At the same time, the searchlight of the guard boat and the searchlight from the prison centered on one spot in the river, and the two watchers could plainly see the head of a swimmer who was forging across the current.

"They've got him!" said Andrew Apperley.

"Game devil!" exclaimed David, filled with admiration. "He doesn't let up a stroke. Hello, Andy, is he going to swim right into the path of that passenger ship?"

For now the towering height of a Boston passenger boat appeared slipping down the stream, and to the amazement of the Apperleys, they saw the swimmer turn and head straight across the way of the speeding ship.

"He'll be free, or else die trying!" exclaimed Andrew. "There's a man of steel, Dave. Look, the boat has him! Comanche, you devil, be still!"

For the wolf dog had broken into a furious howling, and pawed frantically to break loose from his chain. At the same moment, the escaped prisoner swam straight into the path of the speeding boat, and the big ship passed over him.

CHAPTER II.

DOG STRAIN, AND WOLF STRAIN.

"He's gone!" said Andrew Apperley. "But it's a dreadful thing to see, brother!"

"A murderer, most likely," said David calmly. "He's taking the medicine from his own hand that he didn't want to take from the law. We can't waste sympathy on such as he probably was. Look at the guard boat running amuck to make sure that he's gone!"

For as the passenger ship passed on, and the waves of her deep wake tossed the little yacht up and down, the guard boat was weaving here and there across the river, searching for the fugitive. Apparently it had no success, and the searchlight from the prison flashed wildly about, sometimes throwing its blinding brightness straight into the eyes of the two brothers who watched.

"What's quieted Comanche?" asked David at last.

He added suddenly: "And where is he? By gad, he's broken the chain!"

There it lay, a snaky length upon the deck. Apparently it had broken off short beside the collar as the big brute strained and tugged at it for liberty.

"Watch the deck!" said Andrew Apperley briskly.

He hurried below. But he came back almost at once with a gloomy face.

"He must have made for the shore," he said. "And that's the last that we'll see of him. He'll go through the city

like a streak and get to the open country beyond. I tell you, Dave, that I'd rather have lost ten thousand dollars than that monster. We'll never see him like again!"

"I've never seen anything that's pleased me more," answered David. "But hadn't we better send in a warning to the shore? A wild wolf running amuck through the streets——"

"It's too late for warnings. Wherever he's headed, he has gone at full speed, and I know what his speed is like. Hello—my word, what's this!"

He pointed with a rigid arm into the darkness of the river, and David, starting in the same direction, saw something swimming slowly in across the tidal drift. He looked again, and it seemed to him that it was a double shadow. It came closer, and now they made sure of the broad head and the pricking ears of Comanche, with a man's body trailing behind him.

"Do you see? Do you see?" gasped Andrew Apperley. "What was it you said about wolf? Did you ever hear of a wolf going into a river to bring out a drowning man? Is that a dog strain, or is it not?"

They ran down to the prow of the boat, for it was in that direction that the laboring Comanche was making, though it seemed doubtful that the strength of his swimming would enable him to cut in across the sharp sweep of the tidal current.

Andrew Apperley jumped down on the mooring rope, and thrusting his hand far out, he managed to catch the scruff of Comanche's mane as the big animal was carried past. He drew in the dog. It was all his strength could manage, with the assistance of David, to pass the exhausted brute up to the deck.

It was an easier task to draw in the man who had been clinging to Comanche. For all the uproar from Blackwell's Island, and all the play of

searchlights and the activity of the guard boat had been done for the sake of a slender youth who seemed in his early twenties. Andrew passed him to David, and the latter stretched the half-conscious body on the deck.

The next instant he sprang back with a yell of alarm.

"Andrew! That devil of a wolf nearly got me then, and now he's murdering this man from the river—hold on—no, by the Eternal——"

He fell silent, while the older brother, clambering back to the deck, saw a most strange sight.

The rescued man lay at full length, his face turned toward the stars, while he drew each breath with an audible effort. At his head sat Comanche, his legs trembling with weariness but his strength and ferocity rapidly returning.

"By the Eternal!" said Andrew. "He's taking charge!"

"Signal to the guard boat!" said David.

"Not for a million! Turn this poor devil over to the law, after Comanche has saved him from the river? No chance that I'll do that, Dave! But how can we help him with that brute standing over him?"

"I don't know! It's the oddest thing that I've ever known. Makes me dizzy to see it! What happened to the brain of that beast?"

"The dog strain, Dave, the dog strain. In spite of you and the experts, I was right! He's not pure wolf! There, our man from the river is beginning to come to life! He'll pull through. But how could he have missed that ship? It seemed to pass straight over him!"

"He must have dived and swum under the surface until he was clear of it."

The fugitive came swaying to a sitting posture, at which Comanche, with a throat-tearing snarl, crowded closer.

"Look out!" warned Andrew Apperley. "That dog is dangerous, my friend!"

"This dog? Dangerous?" said the man from the river. Then he laughed, weakly, and passed his arm around the neck of Comanche. "Dangerous?" said the fugitive.

And Comanche turned and licked the face of him he had saved! The brothers, filled with wonder and awe, could not speak.

"I'd offer you something," said Andrew, "if I could get it past Comanche."

"You've given me enough," said the other. "I'll have my pins steady under me in a minute, and then I'll cut on for the shore."

"How did that ship happen to miss you?"

"It happened to save me. They were right at my back, yapping that they'd turn the Gatling loose if I didn't give up and let them take me in. But I tried for the big ship and made it! Then I dived."

He closed his eyes. His nostrils quivered as he drew down the deep breaths.

"Swimming is not my game," he said, his eyes still closed. Then he stiffened a little, and rising to his feet, he stepped toward the rail of the boat nearest the shore, but his legs sagged under him.

It was easy to understand what had stirred him, for the guard boat—its captain apparently guessing what had happened—had swept in suddenly straight toward the yacht.

"Do you know my face?" asked the man from the river.

"No," said David Apperley.

"Have you ever heard of Jack Deems?"

"No."

"Think again."

"Hold on now! Not 'Single' Jack Deems!"

"Does that give you the horrors?"

The two brothers were silent.

"I'm going down into the cabin," said the fugitive. "When they come to search the boat, perhaps you'll stave

them off. If you do, that means my life. Perhaps you won't. In that case, I'm getting only what's coming to me. At any rate, I'll wait down there!"

No matter what was his fatigue, or how complete his bodily exhaustion, his mind, it was clear, was strong and steady. And he had gained perfect control of his voice before he uttered a word. Yet, when he started down the little hatch, he was reeling and drooping with every step he made. Comanche advanced, growling at his heels, and disappeared behind him.

At the same time, the blinding brightness of the searchlight from the guard boat fell full upon the faces of the two brothers.

"Now, Dave," said his brother. "Tell me what to do. Do we try to save this fellow?"

"No, confound him! I don't like the job. Anybody but Single Jack!"

"I never heard of him."

"You never did? I forget that he hasn't been going so very long. Seven or eight years, I suppose, and you've been away more than that! But Single Jack? I tell you, Andy, he kills a man as readily as you or I would kill a chicken!"

"Tush!" said Andrew. "Seven or eight years? He's not more than twenty-two!"

"He began as a boy. Here's the guard boat. Thank goodness we can soon wash our hands of him!"

"Like Pilate?" asked the older brother.

"Why, Andy, what mad stuff are you talking now? Pilate?"

"Well, Dave, I don't pretend to be logical. But I say that I'm not going to give that young rascal up if I can help it! There's something about him that appeals to me!"

"Like the dog strain in your wolf," said David sarcastically, "you like the wolf strain in that man. Well, Andy, you can do the talking, because I'll have

Before the sergeant could throw the bomb, a slightly built man leaped from the cabin door straight past the sergeant and his men, and dived over the rail.



no more to do with the game. Single Jack Deems needs hanging, and every

good citizen ought to see that he gets it!"

"I'm not a good citizen, then," answered Andrew. "I'm only a man. But by the Eternal, Dave, when a man can win over a dog as he has won over Comanche, there has to be good in him, and a lot of it! His arm around Comanche's neck! Did you see it?"

"Very pretty!" growled David, "but

I'll have no more to do with this mess. You handle it by yourself!"

Flinging himself into a chair, he bit off the end of a cigar with an angry click of his teeth.

Andrew cast a single doubtful look back at his brother; then he shrugged his shoulders. For a good many years he had been half brother and half father to this young man, but he had never been so put out as he was on this night.

He threw another look toward the black mouth of the hatch. Then he turned to face the inquisition from the guard boat, which was sliding smoothly alongside.

CHAPTER III.

A HUNTER OF MEN.

"Yacht, ahoy!"

"Hello, guard boat."

"We're coming aboard you. Man a boat hook, forward!"

The low-lying speedster came to a rest, its engines throbbing with impatient power.

"Who's in charge here?"

"I am," said Andrew Apperley.

"A moment ago, one of the men on my ship thought that he saw the escaped man swimming toward your boat. Could he have reached you and stowed himself below?"

"No chance for that," said Andrew quietly. "There's no port through which he could have climbed. If he came aboard, he would have had to come across the deck—and we've been here ever since the chase began."

"What is your name, please?"

"Andrew Apperley. This is David Apperley, my brother."

"David Apperley—not the same one that shoots big game? I've read about you, Mr. Apperley!"

He nodded toward David with much admiration.

"Only," he went on, "the man we're looking for is a lot worse than any tiger

or lion that you ever have stood up to, Mr. Apperley! Single Jack Deems—you know about him, of course!"

"I've heard about him, but only through the newspapers. And they live by exaggeration, of course."

"They couldn't exaggerate about Deems. He was born to make perfect newspaper copy."

"For what crime are they holding him at Blackwell's Island?"

"Nobody seems to know, exactly, but we guess that it has something to do with forgery, on the one hand, and an immigration scandal on the other. Some people high up have been behind Deems in this!"

"And they were examining Deems?"

"Trying to. As well examine a lizard or a snake, I say. A bullet is the only thing that can get acquainted with what goes on inside of the head of Single Jack! Now they've let him slide through their hands again. They'll sack the warden on account of this job!"

"Has he ever escaped before?"

"They've never held him long enough to bring him to a real trial. He always cuts loose in short order. They had him five times before this, and this makes the sixth time. Everybody thinks that he has something on somebody high up, and that because of that he can get loose each time. But then again, you can't tell. He's just a slippery devil!"

The police sergeant who commanded the boat strolled across the deck of the yacht and paused at the hatch.

"Of course," he said, "Single Jack can make himself almost invisible. He might have slithered across the deck while you were looking the other way. He might be down there now, listening to what I'm saying about him——"

His own suggestion made him step back hastily from the mouth of the hatch.

"Go wherever you like," said Andrew Apperley, "except that if you go be-

low in this boat, you'll be carrying a good deal of risk."

"Risk? Risk?" snapped the sergeant, changing his tone abruptly. "Peters and Swain, get over here. Go down and man the cabin of this boat and see what's what. Look around, you understand!"

Andrew Apperley shrugged his shoulders, while David whispered in the wildest alarm: "What will happen if they find Deems down there? They'll know that we've been sheltering him! They'll make it hard for both of us, Andy!"

"Hush, David! We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Ah, I thought so!"

For as the valiant Swain and Peters marched down the narrow flight of steps, one behind the other, there arose from the depths of the cabin a most hideous growling and snarling.

Swain and Peters tumbled hastily back to the deck.

"We're looking for a man. There's a lion or something down there!" said one of them.

"What's this, Apperley?" asked the sergeant, whose suspicions seemed to have been growing sharper for some time.

"Nothing," said Andrew, "except the danger that I was trying to tell you about a moment ago, when you wouldn't listen. I say that there's a big dog of mine in that cabin. He broke his chain and skulked down there. And because he's too wild to handle, we'll have to starve him out before we can manage him. He's a ravening devil, sergeant!"

"Devil, eh? Devil, eh?" snapped the sergeant, growing ugly. "Now, Apperley, no man has a dog that won't come when it's called. I say: Call up that dog of yours at once, because we're going to search that cabin."

"Comanche! Here, boy!" called Andrew obediently.

For answer, out of the unknown dark-

ness beyond the hatch there came forth the same fiendish sound which they had heard before, and even the stolid sergeant shuddered.

"I'd give a good deal to see that dog," said he.

"It's really more wolf than dog," said Andrew. "And a very rare fellow he is. There's the chain which he just broke to get away into the cabin!"

The sergeant picked up the remnant and tested the strength of the links, and examined the broken link, and the state of the steel which had snapped there.

"I would have said," remarked the sergeant, "that even a horse would have a job to break this chain. Did a dog really manage it?"

"He did. A dog that weighs as much as I do!"

The sergeant was impressed. In his soul of souls he was simply a hunter, and it was only chance which had made him a hunter of men instead of a hunter of beasts.

Now all of the hunting instincts welled up in him and took mastery.

"I *will* see that brute," said he. "I'm coming back here by daylight and have a peek at it. But by the way, I suppose that where a brute like that is, there isn't apt to be any stranger lingering about?"

Said Andrew Apperley quietly: "I've seen Comanche kill a mastiff with one slash!"

"Eh? Then what chance would there be for a man that ran into him in the dark?"

"No chance in the world, I suppose."

It seemed that Andrew had certainly won his point, and the sergeant returned to the rail of the boat. But there he lingered, ill at ease.

"I'll tell you what," said he, "I've a bit of a trick that will handle Comanche for you, most probably. It'll drive him out into the open, you can be sure of that. It's a little smoke bomb. Won't do a bit of harm, but in half a minute

it'll fill that cabin full of smoke, and Comanche will have to come out to breathe fresh air. Then we'll guarantee to handle him for you. Peters and Loren and Gregg, stand by half a dozen of you with ropes, and Swain, go bring me a smoke bomb. One of you open the cabin door——"

"And let that devil of a wolf out at me?" growled the man to whom the sergeant had nodded.

"I'll do it myself," replied the sergeant with perfect cheerfulness.

"Stop him!" gasped David Apperley.

But Andrew was as cool as chilled steel.

"He takes his own chances. It's his own profession. Besides, I don't think that this Single Jack is the sort of a man who'll do a murder in the dark, if he can avoid it!"

"What makes you think that?"

"Hush! There he goes. Poor sergeant! Comanche will rip his throat in two. I can't stand that!"

He jumped up.

"Sergeant, you'll be killed by that dog, I warn you!"

"Why, a man can only die once!" said the sergeant, still cheerfully.

He flung open the cabin door and instantly leaped back to the deck, with a revolver in his hand to cover any advance that might be made upon him.

But there was no response from the depths of the cabin. All was quiet there. The great wolf dog made not so much as a sound.

"It may be creeping out at you now, sergeant," suggested Andrew Apperley.

"We'll soon have the big fellow," said the sergeant. "Here's the bomb. A moment after I've thrown it into the cabin, that hatchway will seem to be on fire. But don't worry. It'll make nothing but smoke. You couldn't make a fire out of it to save you! Your permission, Apperley?"

"I suppose that I haven't the power to prevent you."

"Not while I'm searching for an escaped prisoner," said the sergeant with an expressive wink. "So if you don't mind, I'll consider that I have your permission to throw this smoke bomb into your cabin, Mr. Apperley."

"I suppose," said Andrew, "that I must give way. It won't do any harm to any of the furniture or hangings in the cabin?"

"Not a whit. There are no acid fumes about the stuff. Nothing but harmless smoke, I assure you. There will be no danger."

The sergeant poised the bomb to toss it lightly into the cabin, but before the bomb could leave his hand a slightly built man, moving as fast and soundlessly as a flying shadow, leaped from the cabin door straight past the sergeant and his men, and dived over the rail. Dived so deep and so far that he did not break the surface of the water again as he came up.

The sergeant cried out in an agony. "It's Single Jack. Jerry, you saw right! Get out the dinghy!"

The sergeant did not think of stopping now to ask any further questions as to why the fugitive from justice should have been in the cabin of the *Nancy Lou*. He was instantly proceeding toward the shore in the direction in which the escaped man had swum.

David and Andrew saw three men leaning on the oars, while the plump form of the sergeant stood in the prow, a revolver in each hand.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHENEVER YOU GIVE THE WORD!"

The two brothers watched the boat of the man hunters swing on among the other craft between them and the shore. They saw that the excitement spread like wildfire along the docks.

"How long before they'll have him?" suggested David.

"Never, Dave. They'll never have that lad. Not to-night, at the least! It isn't in them to get him back to-night!"

"Is that instinct which informs you of that?" asked David dryly.

"You may call it instinct, if you wish. But isn't it an odd thing that we haven't heard any more reports from Comanche?"

"Very odd. They're pealing an alarm on that church bell, aren't they?"



While two of the porters were taking the big, muzzled brute for a walk, a man dashed at them, knocked one down, and tore the leash from the hand of the second.

And see the lanterns along the docks. They're leaving nothing undone to catch this fellow!"

"They'll have no luck, however. They'll have no luck, I tell you! Let's go down and take a peek through the open door of that cabin."

"And have that brute spring out and take us by the throats?"

"If he springs out, Dave, he'll do us no harm."

He drew a Colt and held it before him.

"You've seen me shoot with this little gun, old fellow. I won't miss a target as big as the heart of a wolf, if Comanche thinks fit to tackle us!"

"Very well, you go first. I've no desire for that sort of fame, old man!"

David followed in behind his brother.

They went down the steps to the door of the cabin, which stood wide open, and then Andrew threw a lantern's light into the interior and exposed a very odd tableau, indeed! For there lay the great wolf dog stretched upon the floor, with strips of bedding from the bunk used to tie his four legs together, while a bandage around his head securely muzzled and gagged him!

"By heavens," said David, "he managed that job alone! And in silence! But why did he bother to tie up the wolf?"

"I'll tell you, Dave, but you'll laugh at me."

"Try me."

"He knew that when he bolted for freedom, the dog would follow him, and if there were any other people on the deck, Comanche would go for their throats on the way to the waterside. So he made Comanche safe before he made his own bolt for freedom."

"Andy, you'll have Single Jack turned into a saint before long!"

"Well, there's the fact. He tied Comanche. If you can find a better reason for the tying, let me hear it!"

But David was silent, poking grudgingly at the mass of the prostrate beast with the toe of his shoe.

"Look at the green devil showing in

his eyes again!" said David. "He's the same Comanche. And I admit that it completely baffles me. How did this fellow manage to do it? And in the first place, how did he ever call Comanche into the water to save him?"

"I wouldn't make as much of a mystery of it as all that! No, there's no use actually *inventing* difficulties, when there are enough of them already about the thing. But I'll tell you what, old fellow, it simply goes as an added proof of what I've said before concerning Comanche. There's a broad dog strain in him, and the big rascal simply reverted to the dog characteristics when it came to the pinch. How else can you explain it? He hears a commotion, and presently he sees a man in the water, half dead, or more than half dead, and barely able to make any headway against the current. Comanche gets excited.

"The life-saving instinct of his dog ancestors was working in him. Into the water he dived. He worked up to the sinking man, and brought him back to this ship, not because he prized this ship as a place of refuge, but simply because it was the point closest to him."

David listened and nodded.

"All very well," said he. "I admit that you have a touch of logic in that. But at the same time, Andy, I feel that there's something else behind it. There's something infernally mysterious about the whole affair! Such a devil of a dog couldn't have been transformed into a handy pet in two seconds."

"Still, you want to have your little mystery out of this matter. But I tell you, Dave, that mystery isn't needed. Just be logical and look at the facts. I say that the life-saving strain cropped up broad and big in Comanche. He couldn't help jumping in to save Single Jack Deems, and after he had been working for the man—why, Dave, you know that the blackest-hearted of us will love the thing that we've suffered for.

You can't explain mother love, for instance, except on the ground that the mother has suffered so much for the life which she has brought into the world. The same with this monster of ours. He couldn't help having affection for a man whose life he had saved."

David listened and nodded.

"You have the logic," he said. "I don't pretend that I would say what I think in a crowd. But at the same time, I feel that there was something peculiar about the whole affair. Very peculiar, Andy. But let it go. We'll put the new chain on him and get him back to the deck before we take the bandages off him. How neatly they're laid on, as if he were taking care to hold the big dog without hurting him! And what a miracle, really, that the wolf dog would let Single Jack handle him in this fashion—no matter how he may have learned to love him! And all in a brief half hour."

He shook his head, and indeed, even the matter-of-fact nature of Andrew was a little shocked by the thought of what had happened. For it considerably transcended the limits of the possible, as we are apt to conceive of that term.

They put the new chain on the wolf dog and returned the animal to its place on the deck, where they fitted a sort of loose muzzle on the great head, and then removed the bonds. In spite of the muzzle, Comanche made a flying slash with his teeth at Andrew, and the latter reeled back suddenly, with a shout. Yet there was no harm done, and presently the two brothers were seated side by side on the poop of the yacht, as before.

"Who would think," said David gently, as though afraid to break the quiet which had settled over the river, "that there had been such a crashing and smashing of guns, and sweeping of searchlights, and hooting of horns! It's all as quiet as a grave, now."

"They're not quiet—the hunters, I mean. They're still going along the docks. But they'll never get him again—at least, not to-night."

"I think not," agreed David. "He's not the sort of a fox that can be run twice and caught in the same day. What did you think of him, Andy?"

"I had an odd feeling about him. But that's because I knew that he was Single Jack, of course!"

"I had an odd feeling about him, too. What was yours?"

"It's hard to describe. I'll tell you one part of it. Whenever I glanced at him, he was grave, and he was usually looking away from me. But the instant that I glanced away from him, I felt that he was looking straight at me and smiling, with a sort of superior strength, and understanding, and triumph. However, I haven't been able to describe exactly what I mean. It escapes from the words."

"I think I understand you, though, because I felt something pretty closely related to what you've been talking about. I mean to say, that when I saw him first, before I had heard his name, or so much as dreamed what he might be, I had a very chilly feeling. I mean, when I looked him in the face, I had exactly the feeling that comes over you when you feel that some one is staring at the small of your back—some one dangerous, a man or a beast—it shoots a chill through your spinal marrow, you know."

"Exactly!"

"Well, I felt that when I faced him. Just as though there were two of him—one before me, and one sneaking up behind me!"

"You phrased it just as though you were speaking for me! I had the same sensation, also! But what about his face, old fellow? What did that seem like to you?"

"Why, young—good-looking, rather, I suppose. But I don't remember the

features very clearly. They seem to be under a cloud in my memory. Only I know that if I were to see that face anywhere, I'd instantly recognize it!"

David fell silent, musing and nodding to himself.

"I've read something about it. That's been the trouble with Single Jack's crooked career. He would have been the greatest criminal in the world from the very first. But you see, wherever he went, he was always recognized instantly. Nobody that ever had a glimpse of him ever forgot him. And even his best friends were a little bit afraid of him. Well—you know that it's easy to betray things that you're a bit afraid of!"

"Yes, I know that!"

"And that's exactly what happened to Single Jack. It seems that he was always fairly square with the people around him, and it seems that they have always been double crossing him, and after seeing his face, I can understand why. They were too much afraid of him to be square with him. Isn't that it?"

"I suppose so, of course!" granted Andrew.

"And the man has been going like a shadow through the world, doing impossible things, and playing a single hand because he could never find another living creature in whom he could trust!"

There was a silence, and then Andrew murmured:

"By the way, Dave, the trip to the West——"

"What about it?"

"You remember our wager of a few moments ago—if any one ever dared to put his hand on the head of the wolf dog——"

David Apperley struck his hands together with an exclamation.

"Confound it," said he, "I'm caught. Well, Andy, we'll start whenever you give the word."

CHAPTER V.

SINGLE JACK AGAIN.

A week later, David Apperley had started with his brother for the West. He was to make a six months' stay, and if he did not like the country, in that time, he was to come back and continue his old life among his friends in the East. He did not like the idea of making this trip. If he wanted good hunting, as he repeatedly told his brother, he could go to places where there was something better to be had than wolves and antelopes, and only a very occasional bear. This was a sheer waste of time. However, Andrew would never give way, and therefore the trip had to be made, the trunks packed, the tickets bought, and the long journey overland commenced. In the baggage car went the great wolf dog, Comanche, whirling back to find his own home range, and learn to bay the moon from the hacienda of Andrew Apperley. But even on the train, Comanche was a trouble.

At Buffalo, while two of the well-tipped porters were taking the big, muzzled brute for a walk, a man dashed at them, knocked one down, and tore the leash from the hand of the second. But at that very moment, by great luck, a mob of section hands answered the yells of the negroes. They swept over the would-be dog thief, and he had to abandon Comanche in order to take care of himself. With a revolver which flashed and threatened many times, he slid through the crowd without firing a shot and escaped.

The Apperleys talked the matter over with a good deal of astonishment, but they finally decided that it must have been some circus agent, for both agreed that Comanche would make a magnificent show attraction if he were once well-lodged behind bars!

They dismissed that matter from their minds, therefore, except that there

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were extra large tips for the men in the baggage car, and extra guarding of the big dog day and night. And so the miles spun away behind them, while Andrew Apperley showed his younger brother why it was that he looked upon the West, not as a strange land, but as a region in which he himself already possessed almost imperial rights. He showed his brother the nature of his empire.

Great changes were passing over the West. For many and many a generation that land had been covered with cattle which were of little importance to the rest of the world. Their hoofs and hides and horns could be used, to be sure. But meat and bones were wasted. Men only killed a steer for the sake of a single steak, and passed on. There was no sinful waste, if only the hide were saved.

By tens of thousands, the gaunt-ribbed longhorns wandered across the plains and filled the valleys. The summer burned them thin. The winter drifted them before the snow and killed them like flies. But still they increased in numbers.

Yet all this beef was useless until the engineers and the wealth of the nation had blasted a way across the continent, and the railroad began to tap the vast food resources of the West. That beef was not so good as that of the corn-fed cattle in the East. But it was good enough to fill the poor man's pot. And beef is beef, even though it may be tough! So those thousands of cattle, wandering across the plains, acquired

a sudden value, and Andrew Apperley, out West on a camping and hunting trip, had seen the possibilities which were opening here. He had plenty of money, and a venturesome spirit. He did not know the cattle business, but he could find hired men who did. So he went at the thing in the most whole-souled manner. He came on the heels of days when cows in Texas could be bought for a dollar a head. Immediately values changed. He saw steers sold for thirty-five and forty dollars a head. The Indians had been fenced away on reserva-

tions where they were supposed to remain, and those Indians had to be fed. The railroad was rushing tens of thousands of cattle toward the East. Vacuums began to appear on the crowded ranges. The market was buying a little faster than the source could supply the want; therefore the prices remained good.

Buying foundation cattle for his herds, here and there, Andrew Apperley soon spotted the country with great droves of his cows. He would buy twenty-dollar beef in the south and herd it north where it sold for forty dollars. Every year made him richer as his capital doubled. He grew so great in wealth that he himself was beginning to lose track of the details and of the total mass. All that he could do was to evolve new combinations; open new markets and flood them with cows; arrange sweeping drives over vast distances—and buy off and fight off the Indians, the petty white thieves, and the organized rustlers!



The wolf dog.

For such a great and rapid growth was not unaccompanied by envy, and there were men who would harm him if they could. The markets were open for any man's cattle. Foolish questions were not asked concerning brands and bills of sale. The East wanted cattle; the railroads were eager to have their strings of cars filled; and the buyers simply raked in the beef by the herd, not lingering too scrupulously over details such as brands.

In such a time, the temptation was great. One needed only run one's horse around a neat little group of beeves, and head them through a cut among the hills. A few days later, one's cows were in the hands of the shippers, and a few solid thousands had sunk into one's wallet.

That was not all. On the great range, the squatters dropped down, here and there, and quietly they set to work, at odd moments, with their ropes and running irons. They devised brands which were merely mild alterations of those of the nearest cattle king. From season to season, the home herd of the squatter grew with a strange speed. Finally he was strong enough and rich enough to be honest. His fortune was established. He stepped into the ranks of law and order and began to oil up his gun to get the "confounded rustlers!"

Now such a colossus as Andrew Apperley was sure to attract the attention of all of these thieves. He lost cows and calves by ones and twos every hour of the day, and now and then little rustlers clipped off a dozen, or fifty head. Then there were bolder bands who slashed away cattle from his herds a hundred at a time. Worst of all, there were the well-organized, highly paid, professional, and thoroughgoing bands of rustlers who took five hundred head at a time, and thought that year lost in which they did not manage to make one great drive of two or three thousand head in a single haul!

David Apperley heard these tales with increasing excitement.

"But Andy," he would cry, "there's a law in the land! We pay taxes to our government. It must protect us. You're being bled to the extent of half your profits, almost."

"Don't blame the government, Dave. It does what it can. But it can't quite keep pace with the growth of our country in square miles of cattle and cattle interests. Law is working its way toward us, but it will be some years before it arrives, and in the meantime, Alec Shodress grows fat on me!"

"Who is this Shodress?"

"The smoothest, cleverest, deepest scoundrel that ever smiled in your face while he sent a man to stab you in the back! He has my section of the country by the throat, and he's bleeding it white!"

"I'm growing hot under the collar. Tell me about Shodress!"

"It's no use, Dave. I've brought you out West to have a good time and to see the country. I don't want you to pitch in and fight my battles for me. I'll try to handle them for myself! Besides, the Shodress story is too long!"

But David insisted, and so the story was forthcoming. Alexander Shodress, of a dim or unknown past, had dropped into the West and suddenly found himself at home in the region of cattle and cattle thieves. But he believed that there was nothing like a life of security; therefore he started to make himself secure. He arranged matters so that he could steal with a perfect security to himself.

"How can he do that?" asked David, hot with interest.

"It sounds odd. The point is that Shodress himself remains in the background and sends out his thugs and his crooks to do the active riding themselves. He supplies the money and the rewards. If any of them are caught and jailed, he hires good lawyers to de-

fend them and almost always brings them off. Or, if peaceful means don't work, he can bribe the jail keeper to allow an escape, and in a pinch, he has sent along his entire little army to get one of his adherents out of jail. So he's surrounded by men who believe in him. He runs the biggest store, the biggest hotel, the biggest saloon in the town of Yeoville. He's the informal banker of the place. In fact, Shodress is Yeoville! Every one knows that he is crooked, but no one wants to talk about it. He's polite, good-natured on the surface, and very much given to acts of charity. There's not a poor family within a hundred miles that can't tell you how Shodress has helped them out time and again. They never stop to ask where the money came from, and they are just a bit amused if they guess that the money which comes to them has been dipped out of my pocket by their Alec Shodress. And so they continue to vote for his men for sheriff; he practically appoints the judges; he runs the county, and the county, on the whole, is glad to be run. I own the major portion of the property of the countryside. Shodress makes it a rule to be scrupulously just to every one except to me, so that he has a thousand men praising him, and only one man to damn him. Well, Dave, in a country like ours, a thousand votes always weigh down one, and while he can do what he likes, there's no way in which I can lift a hand against him. I couldn't possibly find a jury that would vote in any way against the desires of big Shodress."

David listened to this tale in an impatient agony of indignation.

"There has to be a way out!" he exclaimed. "My word, Andy, you forget that I'm a lawyer. I haven't been a very active one, but maybe this is my chance to hang out my shingle!"

"Where?" said Andrew, smiling.

"In Yeoville!" exclaimed David.

"Hello!"

"I mean it. By the powers, Andy, I've always liked a little spice of danger, and instead of hunting wild beasts, let me have a fair chance to hunt what trouble I can find in Yeoville!"

"I'd never consent. They'd kill you in five minutes!"

"They wouldn't. I'll show them one decent man willing to stand up against crooked Shodress. And in the long run, even crooks prefer honest people. I'll meet Shodress on his own ground. I'll open a store, and a saloon, and a hotel—and I'll use my lawyer's training to fight every case against him through the courts. At first I'll lose everything. But after a while, I'll begin to get my hands on a little of the estimation of the county——"

Andrew Apperley leaned forward and looked deeply and earnestly into the face of his younger brother.

"You would be taking your life in your hands," he said gravely.

"The game would be worth it."

"It will kill you or make you. Are you really willing to take the chance?"

"Hot to do it!"

The train was rolling southwest from St. Louis as this conversation progressed, and the black of the night turned the faces of the windows into deep and polished pools of ebony in which the lighted interior of the car was reflected.

David, shaking out his newspaper, his thoughts far away on the new life which he was even now planning, suddenly exclaimed: "Hello! Here's what you've done, Andy! This fine hero of yours, this Single Jack, is raising the very devil in Boston! Look!"

The headline spread halfway across the front page. In a Boston bank robbery, three men had been shot down in cold blood, and the deed was attributed to Single Jack Deems. The police were sure that his was the cruel heart and the sure hand which had done that black deed.

The train slowed, grinding into a small siding beyond the city.

"He may have done it," admitted Andrew. "I played long chances that he might be worth saving, and perhaps I was wrong. And if—good heavens!"

He sat rigid.

"Look!" he whispered.

"Where?"

"Beyond that lamp beside the station building. There, now, just pressing past two of those expressmen——"

"Ah, you mean the slender fellow with the broad-brimmed hat?"

"Yes. Ever see him before?"

"I don't think so. He looks very much like any one!"

"Does he? Not at all! Watch his step!"

"What of it? Like the step of any one, isn't it?"

"Man, man, after you've been in this country a while, you'll learn to use your eyes better. Like a cat's step, I'd say! But wait—what the devil is he doing? He's going straight toward that pair of porters who are with Comanche. Look, Dave, he's offering them money——"

The stranger in question had turned a little, at this moment. Now it was David's turn to exclaim. "It's Single Jack!"

"It's Single Jack," Andrew nodded. "He's trying to bribe those negroes. He's got a handful of money, there—and look at Comanche!"

The great wolf dog was going into the maddest ecstasies, flinging himself out furiously, again and again, in an effort to get at Single Jack. But those were not ecstasies of fury; even at that distance, they could see that the big brute was vibrating with joy.

Andrew and his brother were already on the way to stop the criminal, whatever his purpose. But when they reached the place, they found the famous thug gone, and the two porters were going up and down to exercise the

dog. The faces of both seemed to Andrew Apperley a little drawn.

"What's happened to you, lately?" asked Andrew Apperley.

"Mister Apperley," said the bigger of the two negroes, "I dunno what sort of a lining this here dog has got inside of him, silver or gold, but there was a gemman here, just now, that would have given us anything we asked for, if we'd only let him have that lead rope for a half of a minute, so that the dog could get to him——"

"Don't worry about that," said Andrew. "I'll see that you get just as much as he offered you. Besides that, I'll see that you have a recommendation for honesty to the president of the road. Beyond that, keep your eyes sharp, and never take Comanche out for exercise unless you have a crowd around you to help you."

They went back to their seats in the car, Andrew with an anxious face.

"You see the story?" he asked.

"I see that the Boston police have lied. Single Jack could never have committed that Boston crime in time to get here to St. Louis."

"That's one thing. But the most important thing is that Single Jack is following us and trying to get Comanche away from us. And I suppose that it would be a little more comfortable if we had the devil himself at our heels!"

"Following us, for the sake of a dog?"

"You saw for yourself."

"What on earth could that hunted thug do with a dog?"

"I don't know. I don't explain, but I tell you that we haven't seen the last of Mr. Deems!"

CHAPTER VI.

CASA APPERLEY.

They turned the question seriously back and forth in their minds. It was Andrew who proposed what seemed nearest to a solution of the mystery.

"This fellow Deems is a city rat. Never been out of the shadow of the city alleys in his life, but when he saw Comanche, he lost his head about the big dog. He had never seen anything like Comanche before. He owed his life in the river to that brute. And after he got away from the boat and thought the thing over, he couldn't root Comanche out of his memory. He simply wanted that dog and had to have it. Like a

train across the continent. The first time, he tried to get the dog by force, and he would have succeeded, except that luck was against him. The second time, he tried bribery, but he failed that time, also. What will he do next?"

David shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you remember," he asked, "how he headed for that big passenger ship as it came down the East River?"

"Of course I remember."



"It's Single Jack!" exclaimed Dave

child rather than a grown man. You know, Dave, that most criminals are children in intelligence. He couldn't be happy without Comanche—though he probably hasn't the slightest idea what he'll do with the dog after he gets it. So he crept out from the shadow of the city, and he's dogged this

"Well, I've an idea that he'll get Comanche before he's through with the game. But what a rat he is, Andy! We fish him out of the river and save his hide. Then he turns around and tries to steal from you!"

They talked no more of Single Jack Deems, but they let the word go forth that the man who was attempting to get the wolf dog was the famous outlaw. And that was sufficient to surround Comanche with trebled attention.

In the meantime, the train was streaking steadily west and south. Finally they drew up at their last stop. The Apperleys no longer were looking through the window of the train at the brown desert, partially obscured by swirls of dust. They were standing under that same hot sky, pale and blue-white above them. Into the waiting buckboard they climbed. Their luggage was piled into another and larger wagon, and with Comanche secured behind the seat, they started the drive toward the Apperley ranch.

A bronzed cow-puncher cantered his pinto alongside.

"Is there any news worth telling, Joe?" asked Andrew Apperley.

"It depends," said the puncher. "What kind of thing makes news?"

"Bad news first. What about Shodress?"

"Shodress? He's been pretty quiet, except about three weeks ago. His boys lifted eleven hundred head off the Dingle place."

"Eleven hundred head!"

"Sure. They came down in a mob. They killed Christy Barr and old Lewes. They shot up Lefty and Smith. And after that there was nobody even to trail 'em. They got clean away. A lot of us tried to pick up their trail. But they were gone. We couldn't locate a hoof of the whole bunch except one old cow that had been cut off by lobos and part of her ate. Shodress is still riding high and pretty."

The rancher listened to this story with an emotionless face. But his brother inquired anxiously: "Wait a moment, Andrew. Eleven hundred head at twenty dollars a head——"

"At thirty-five dollars a head, if you please."

"Why, Andy, that's close to forty thousand dollars snapped away——"

"Gone right up in smoke, of course!"

"And nothing done about it?"

"What can be done?"

"Why, you know that Shodress did it!"

"Don't we! But how can we prove it? And if we bring the case to trial, it will have to be before Shodress' pet judge. And it will be a jury of his hired men who listen to the case. We tried once or twice before. But the law has only one leg, out in this direction, and Shodress possesses the only crutch that enables it to walk!"

He spoke with a good humor and self-control that amazed his younger brother.

"How have you learned to stand this stuff?" asked David.

"Poker, Dave," said the other, good-naturedly. "Poker taught me how to keep my face—and how to wait for my turn at the cards. One of these days I'll run up a stacked deck and hand the Shodress gang a deal that will finish them off, I hope."

"Comanche don't look no thinner," sang the puncher, pointing to the big bound and muzzled brute.

"He's found a friend," said Andrew Apperley.

"Hold on! You mean that?"

"Yes. Ever hear of Single Jack Deems?"

"No hombre by that name ever been heard of around here," said the puncher.

"Well, you may hear of him before long," said Andrew Apperley, and he added to his brother: "That's fame, for you, Dave! There's the most spectacular criminal in the country, and he

isn't known. I tell you, there's a border line between the East and the West, and no news comes across it that's of any importance out here!"

"Then what is of importance?"

"Why—how much water is in the tanks, in the summer. How much snow there is in the winter. What diseases are bothering the cows. Whether the screw worm is bad. Who have been shooting up any of the towns, recently. What is the name of the buckaroo from Montana that rode the outlaw horse in the Jennings outfit, and are they giving a dance to-morrow night at the cross-roads. That's the sort of thing that makes up the news out here."

"No papers? No magazines?"

"Oh, a few. But we don't believe what we read in them. They're all fiction, to us. If we believed them, we might grow lonely, and it's better not to do that! Look ahead, Dave!"

"Well?"

"As we go over the top of that hill, sight down the valley."

They swayed up the hill, and as they lurched into a trot at the crest, David had a glimpse far off of a great green blur of ground, at the head of the valley, and in the middle of that rolling greenery, fenced in with lines of splendid young trees, there was a wide-armed house, sprawling wide across the ground.

"That's the Casa Apperley, Dave!"

CHAPTER VII.

COMANCHE BARKS!

The dining room opened on the *patio* at one end, and at the other on the front garden.

"So that the guests will never be hurt in a stampede," Andrew Apperley explained with a smile.

There was almost room to believe in such an explanation, for that night, on each side of that long table fifteen men sat down to eat, and one man sat at

each end. David, Andrew, and the foreman were the only members of that party who could be said to belong to the "family." The rest were strangers. They spoke a cheerful word of greeting to Andrew, and they acknowledged the introduction to David with a silent glance of interest and criticism. But after that small ceremony, matters went ahead quite as though each man were sitting at his own board.

In the middle of the meal, while roast pork and fried potatoes and cabbage and flapjacks and hominy and butter-milk and coffee flowed by the hundred-weight and the gallon, a thirty-third guest entered that room, a slow-moving, dark-faced man who hung a saddle and a bridle on one of the many pegs at the farther end of the room and then advanced with long strides.

He stood with his back against the wall, his hands dropped on his hips.

"I was sort of pressed for time. I thought you wouldn't mind if I dropped in?"

"Certainly not, Whaley. Did you put up your horse?"

"I left her at the rack."

"I've finished my supper. Take my place, because the rest of the table is filled. I'll see that your mare is fed and grained."

"I think this kind of you, Apperley."

David withdrew with his brother.

"Some old friend of yours?" he asked, amazed at the nonchalant manner in which the stranger had taken the place of the host at the table.

"That's Whaley, the murderer. He killed four men in Tucson, not long ago. I didn't know that he was in this part of the country."

"Good heavens, Andy! Killed four! Are you afraid to tackle him?"

"Afraid? I have enough men on this place to blow twenty Whaleys to the devil and back again. But this man came in and hung his bridle and his saddle on the peg in my house. He

asked for shelter and hospitality, Dave. And that request is irresistible in this part of the world. When he leaves the house, the moment he's off my land I can follow him and stop him, if I wish to. And I can shoot him to death if I'm clever enough and fast enough. But once he passes my threshold, he has a claim on me to do everything that I can to make him comfortable—except that it's not considered good form for an outlaw to ask for ammunition or a change of horses."

David, fresh from the law courts of the East, turned and looked back at the noisy table, for the conversation had not been in the least depressed by the arrival of this famous criminal. Instead, the merriment seemed to have increased. Hard cider was going the rounds, borne in enormous pitchers by the busy waiters. And the joy at the board of Apperley increased every moment—with a murderer sitting at the head of the table!

So David went outdoors with his brother, with many of his former ideas of men and events in this world spinning around in his brain.

He watched Andrew while the latter, with the greatest care, took from the hitching rack the sweating, trembling, down-headed mare from which the outlaw had just dismounted. Her flanks, David saw, were reddened by frequent visitations of the spur. Andrew conducted her to the stable, threw in a pitchfork full of choice hay, and placed grain in her manger. Then he called a stable boy and bade him rub down the mare while she ate.

He returned to the open air with his brother.

"What do you gain by it?" asked David.

"I don't know. Nothing, perhaps. Or again, if I'm ever an outlaw myself, I think that people will be kind to me. Or if that never happens, at least, I sleep sound at nights."

"You've been doing this for years?"

"Yes, ever since I made my big stake and built this place."

"And yet with all your liberality, you can't win a chance at even-handed justice? That speaks hard for the men whom you entertain here!"

"Hospitality is one thing, and a law court is another. These men don't like the law. Many of them have good reasons—the very best of reasons—for not liking it. But at the same time, they give me great privileges. Decency is never wasted out here. I can ride through the wildest parts of the range without a gun, and never be in the slightest danger. I like these people, and I think they like me. That mutual liking is a sufficient reward to me for this money I spend in running a sort of free hotel, as you might call it. Shodress and his crew help themselves to my cattle when they can, and they know that I am bidding my time to get them in trouble for it. Nevertheless, I can ride right into the town of Yeoville, where Shodress is lord and master, and be in no more danger, hardly, than I am at the present moment on my own place. I've worked hard to get a reputation which means as much as this, and it's worth money and effort to maintain the good name. It makes it possible, for instance, for me to trust your own life in Yeoville, if you really are hardy enough to plan on going through with your idea. But if you were not my brother, Dave, you wouldn't last five minutes in that place after the first time that you showed them your hand!"

To this speech, David listened with the greatest attention. It was still another proof that he was in a world which was entirely new.

"Now tell me, frankly," said he, "what I should do if I want to get on in this part of the States?"

"I can tell you in a nutshell. Forget manners; remember to be simple and honest. I don't mean that you're af-

fectured or conceited, now. But in our own part of the world, perhaps, it amounts to a little something to be an Apperley. We're fairly rich; our family is rather old; we move among the best sort of people. All those things make most people we meet take us for granted. But out here you'll find affairs are different. A man is exactly what he proves himself to be. To be rich and of an old family is rather against him, than otherwise. They will take nothing for granted. The first touch of conceit and manners makes their lips curl. Do you understand me? Be simple, straightforward, direct. Talk to every man as though he were your brother—but a brother without the slightest interest in your past greatness or your future success. If you can say something important or entertaining, then talk. Otherwise, shut up and stay silent until you can think of something that's worth listening to. And remember that the fellow you're talking to didn't know your name five minutes before, and that he'll forget it five minutes hence. The greatest thing that can be said about any man in the cattle country is that he's square. That means honest, but it means more than honest. A great many 'square' men, I have no doubt, may sometimes have played



A slow-moving, dark-faced man entered—
the thirty-third guest.

rather a shady game at poker, and may occasionally lift a cow or two for amusement or for beef. But they're fellows who are known to stick by their friends in a pinch; they're men who don't gossip about men who can't defend their own good names; they're fellows who give you half of their last dollar and half of their last drink of whisky not because you're a friend to them, but because you're in need. Now,

Dave, I hope and pray that I've been able to make myself known in this section of the world as a square man, and before you leave me, I want them to call you by the same name. And when one of these cow-punchers who work for me says that my brother is 'Sure a square-shooter,' then I'll know that you've passed muster and received the accolade!"

"I'll remember all this carefully," said David quietly. "Why, Andy, this game is going to be harder than any tiger hunting, and just about as dangerous!"

He added: "There's Comanche yelling at the moon again; or is he calling for his pack?"

"He never had a pack. He's always been a lone wolf."

"Too infernally mean to get on with even a mate, I suppose?"

"He's one of those queer mixtures that can't find a place," said the elder brother thoughtfully. "He's too much of a wolf to get on with dogs, and too much of a dog to get on with wolves. He's too wild to be tamed, and, perhaps, for all we know, he may be too tame to be thoroughly at home in the wilderness."

"You're making a problem out of him," David said with a smile.

"Why not? I'll tell you, Dave, that I never see a strong man gone wrong that I don't feel what a cracking *good* man has gone to waste in the rub of things."

"Tush!" said David, who was far the more hard-headed of the two. "There's

nothing to that. No matter what's in a man, life brings it out, either good or bad, and so there's no use in shedding tears over a wolf dog! A savage brute, mark you my words, that'll never have anything to do with any man except to put teeth in him——"

"And yet, Dave, you yourself saw him act to Single Jack Deems like a mother to a child!"

David fell silent, but still he smiled, and then went off to the room that had been assigned to him. He completed his unpacking, while the rancher went to his office which stood with a door open upon a little private veranda. That open door was a sign that all the world could come freely in to talk business with Mr. Andrew Apperley.

He was no sooner seated at his desk than a flood of work poured in upon him. He forgot time. The afternoon slipped into the evening. Coffee and sandwiches were brought to him at supper time, which was always the rule unless he came out for the meal, and still into the night he went on with his work and picking up the many reins which had been dropped even by his efficient foreman. From the outside he heard a noise that made him lift his head from his work and listen in amazement, for it was the voice of the wolf, Comanche, not baying at the moon with the melancholy wolf yell, but first howling, then growling, and then breaking into a harsh barking!

If Andrew needed any positive proof as to the dog blood in this animal, that sound of barking was enough!

Succeeding chapters of **COMANCHE** will appear serially only in
Far West Illustrated Magazine

You will find the second installment of this stirring Western novel in the
January number of

Far West Illustrated Magazine

on the news stands December 15th

by
Jerome K. Jerome

Author of



"Sylvia of the
Letters"

His Evening Out

THE evidence of the park-keeper, David Bristow, of Gilder Street, Camden Town, is as follows:

I was on duty in St. James' Park on Thursday evening, my sphere extending from the Mall to the northern shore of the ornamental water east of the suspension bridge. At five and twenty to seven I took up a position between the peninsula and the bridge to await my colleague. He ought to have relieved me at half past six, but did not arrive until a few minutes before seven, owing, so he explained, to the breaking down of his motor bus—which may have been true or may not, as the saying is.

I had just come to a halt, when my attention was arrested by a lady. I am unable to explain why the presence of a lady in St. James' Park should have seemed in any way worthy of notice except that, for certain reasons, she reminded me of my first wife. I observed that she hesitated between one of the public seats and two vacant chairs standing by themselves a little farther to the east. Eventually she selected one

of the chairs, and, having cleaned it with an evening paper—the birds in this portion of the park being extremely prolific—sat down upon it. There was plenty of room upon the public seat close to it, except for some children who were playing touch; and in consequence of this I judged her to be a person of means.

I walked to a point from where I could command the southern approaches to the bridge, my colleague arriving sometimes by way of Birdcage Walk and sometimes by way of the Horse Guards' Parade. Not seeing any signs of him in the direction of the bridge, I turned back. A little way past the chair where the lady was sitting I met Mr. Parable. I know Mr. Parable quite well by sight. He was wearing the usual gray suit and soft felt hat with which the pictures in the newspapers have made us all familiar. I judged that Mr. Parable had come from the Houses of Parliament, and the next morning my suspicions were confirmed by reading that he had been present at a tea party given on the terrace by Mr.

Will Crooks. Mr. Parable conveyed to me the suggestion of a man absorbed in thought, and not quite aware of what he was doing; but in this, of course, I may have been mistaken. He paused for a moment to look over the railings at the pelican. Mr. Parable said something to the pelican which I was not near enough to overhear; and then, still apparently in a state of abstraction, crossed the path and seated himself on the chair next to that occupied by the young lady.

From the tree against which I was standing I was able to watch the subsequent proceedings unobserved. The lady looked at Mr. Parable and then turned away and smiled to herself. It was a peculiar smile, and, again in some way I am unable to explain, reminded me of my first wife. It was not till the pelican put down his other leg and walked away that Mr. Parable, turning his gaze westward, became aware of the lady's presence.

From information that has subsequently come to my knowledge, I am prepared to believe that Mr. Parable, from the beginning, really thought the lady was a friend of his. What the lady thought is a matter of conjecture; I can only speak of the facts. Mr. Parable looked at the lady once or twice. Indeed, one might say with truth that he kept on doing it. The lady, it must be admitted, behaved for a while with extreme propriety; but after a time, as I felt must happen, their eyes met, and then it was I heard her say:

"Good evening, Mr. Parable."

She accompanied the words with the same peculiar smile to which I have already alluded. The exact words of Mr. Parable's reply I cannot remember. But it was to the effect that he had thought from the first that he had known her but had not been quite sure.

It was at this point that, thinking I saw my colleague approaching, I went to meet him. I found I was mistaken,

and slowly retraced my steps. I passed Mr. Parable and the lady. They were talking together with what I should describe as animation. I went as far as the southern extremity of the suspension bridge and must have waited there quite ten minutes before returning eastward. It was while I was passing behind them on the grass, partially screened by the rhododendrons, that I heard Mr. Parable say to the lady:

"Why shouldn't we have it together?"

To which the lady replied:

"But what about Miss Clebb?"

I could not overhear what followed, owing to their sinking their voices. It seemed to be an argument. It ended with the young lady laughing and then rising. Mr. Parable also rose, and they walked off together. As they passed me I heard the lady say:

"I wonder if there's any place in London where you're not likely to be recognized."

Mr. Parable, who gave me the idea of being in a state of growing excitement, replied quite loudly:

"Oh, let 'em!"

I was following behind them when the lady suddenly stopped.

"I know!" she said. "The Popular Café."

The park-keeper said he was convinced he would know the lady again, having taken particular notice of her. She had brown eyes and was wearing a black hat supplemented with poppies.

Arthur Horton, waiter at the Popular Café, states as follows:

I know Mr. John Parable by sight. Have often heard him speak at public meetings. Am a bit of a Socialist myself. Remember his dining at the Popular Café on the evening of Thursday. Didn't recognize him immediately on his entrance for two reasons. One was his hat and the other was his girl. I took it from him and hung it up. I

mean, of course, the hat. It was a brand-new bowler, a trifle ikey about the brim. Have always associated him with a soft gray felt. But never with girls. Females, yes, to any extent. But this was the real article. You know what I mean—the sort of girl that you turn round to look after. It was she who selected the table in the corner behind the door. Been there before, I should say.

I should, in the ordinary course of business, have addressed Mr. Parable by name, such being our instructions in the case of customers known to us. But, putting the hat and the girl together, I decided not to. Mr. Parable was all for our three-and-six-penny table d'hôte; he evidently not wanting to think. But the lady wouldn't hear of it.

"Remember Miss Clebb," she reminded him.

Of course, at the time I did not know what was meant. She ordered thin soup, a grilled sole, and cutlets *au gratin*. It certainly couldn't have been the dinner. With regard to the champagne, he would have his own way. I picked him out a dry '94, that you might have weaned a baby on. I suppose it was the whole thing combined.

It was after the sole that I heard Mr. Parable laugh. I could hardly credit my ears, but halfway through the cutlets he did it again.

There are two kinds of women. There is the woman who, the more she eats and drinks the stodgier she gets, and the woman who lights up after it. I suggested a *pêche Melba* between them, and when I returned with it, Mr. Parable was sitting with his elbows on the table gazing across at her with an expression that I can only describe as quite human. It was when I brought the coffee that he turned to me and asked:

"What's doing? Nothing stuffy," he

added. "Is there an exhibition anywhere—something in the open air?"

"You are forgetting Miss Clebb," the lady reminded him.

"For two pins," said Mr. Parable, "I would get up at the meeting and tell Miss Clebb what I really think about her."

I suggested the Earl's Court Exhibition, little thinking at the time what it was going to lead to; but the lady at first wouldn't hear of it, and the party at the next table calling for their bill—they had asked for it once or twice before, when I came to think of it—I had to go across to them.

When I got back the argument had just concluded, and the lady was holding up her finger.

"On condition that we leave at half past nine, and that you go straight to Caxton Hall," she said.

"We'll see about it," said Mr. Parable, and offered me half a crown.

Tips being against the rules, I couldn't take it. Besides, one of the jumpers had his eye on me. I explained to him, jocosely, that I was doing it for a bet. He was surprised when I handed him his hat, but, the lady whispering to him, he remembered himself in time.

As they went out together I heard Mr. Parable say to the lady:

"It's funny what a shocking memory I have for names."

To which the lady replied:

"You'll think it funnier still to-morrow." And then she laughed.

Mr. Horton thought he would know the lady again. He puts down her age at about twenty-six, describing her—to use his own piquant expression—as "a bit of all right." She had brown eyes and a taking way with her.

Miss Ida Jenks, in charge of the Eastern Cigarette Kiosk at the Earl's

Court Exhibition, gives the following particulars:

From where I generally stand I can easily command a view of the interior of the Victoria Hall; that is, of course, to say when the doors are open, as on a warm night is usually the case.

On the evening of Thursday, the twenty-seventh, it was fairly well occupied, but not to any great extent. One couple attracted my attention by reason of the gentleman's erratic steering. Had he been my partner I should have suggested a polka—the tango not being the sort of dance that can be picked up in an evening. What I mean to say is, that he struck me as being more willing than experienced. Some of the bumps she got would have made me cross; but we all have our fancies, and, so far as I could judge, they both appeared to be enjoying themselves. It was after the "Hitchy Koo" that they came outside.

The seat to the left of the door is popular by reason of its being partly screened by bushes, but by leaning forward a little it is quite possible for me to see what goes on there. They were the first couple out, having had a bad collision near the band stand, so easily secured it. The gentleman was laughing.

There was something about him from the first that made me think I knew him, and when he took off his hat to wipe his head it came to me all of a sudden, he being the exact image of his effigy at Madame Tussaud's, which, by a curious coincidence, I happened to have visited with a friend that very afternoon. The lady was what some people would call good looking, and others mightn't.

I was watching them, naturally a little interested. Mr. Parable, in helping the lady to adjust her cloak, drew her—it may have been by accident—toward him; and then it was that a florid gentleman with a short pipe in his mouth

stepped forward and addressed the lady. He raised his hat and, remarking "Good evening," added that he hoped she was "having a pleasant time." His tone, I should explain, was sarcastic.

The young woman, whatever else may be said of her, struck me as behaving quite correctly. Replying to his salutation with a cold and distant bow, she rose, and, turning to Mr. Parable, observed that she thought it was perhaps time for them to be going.

The gentleman, who had taken his pipe from his mouth, said—again in a sarcastic tone—that he thought so too, and offered the lady his arm.

"I don't think we need trouble you," said Mr. Parable, and stepped between them.

To describe what followed I, being a lady, am hampered for words. I remember seeing Mr. Parable's hat go up into the air, and then the next moment the florid gentleman's head was lying on my counter smothered in cigarettes. I naturally screamed for the police, but the crowd was dead against me; and it was only after what I believe in technical language would be termed "the fourth round" that they appeared upon the scene.

The last I saw of Mr. Parable he was shaking a young constable who had lost his helmet, while three other policemen had hold of him from behind. The florid gentleman's hat I found on the floor of my kiosk and returned to him; but after a useless attempt to get it on his head, he disappeared with it in his hand. The lady was nowhere to be seen.

Miss Jenks thinks she would know her again. She was wearing a hat trimmed with black chiffon and a spray of poppies, and was slightly freckled.

Superintendent S. Wade, in answer to questions put him by our representative, vouchsafed the following replies:

Yes. I was in charge of the Vine

Street Police Court on the night of Thursday, the twenty-seventh.

No. I have no recollection of a charge of any description being preferred against any gentleman of the name of Parable.

Yes. A gentleman was brought in about ten o'clock charged with brawling at the Earl's Court Exhibition and assaulting a constable in the discharge of his duty.

The gentleman gave the name of Mr. Archibald Quincey, Harcourt Buildings, Temple.

No. The gentleman made no application respecting bail, electing to pass the night in the cells. A certain amount of discretion is permitted to us, and we made him as comfortable as possible.

Yes. A lady.

No. About a gentleman who had got himself into trouble at the Earl's Court Exhibition. She mentioned no name.

I showed her the charge sheet. She thanked me and went away.

That I cannot say. I can only tell you that at nine fifteen on Friday morning bail was tendered, and, after inquiries, accepted in the person of Julius Addison Tupp, of the Sunnybrook Steam Laundry, Twickenham.

That is no business of ours.

The accused, who, I had seen to it, had had a cup of tea and a little toast at seven thirty, left in company with Mr. Tupp soon after ten.

Superintendent Wade admitted he had known cases where accused parties, to avoid unpleasantness, had stated their names to be other than their own, but declined to discuss the matter further.

Superintendent Wade, while expressing his regret that he had no further time to bestow upon our representative, thought it highly probable that he would know the lady again if he saw her.

Without professing to be a judge of such matters, Superintendent Wade thinks she might be described as a

highly intelligent young woman, and of exceptionally prepossessing appearance.

From Mr. Julius Tupp, of the Sunnybrook Steam Laundry, Twickenham, upon whom our representative next called, we have been unable to obtain much assistance, Mr. Tupp replying to all questions put to him by the one formula, "Not talking."

Fortunately, our representative, on his way out through the drying ground, was able to obtain a brief interview with Mrs. Tupp.

Mrs. Tupp remembers admitting a young lady to the house on the morning of Friday, the twenty-eighth, when she opened the door to take in the milk. The lady, Mrs. Tupp remembers, spoke in a husky voice, the result, as the young lady explained with a pleasant laugh, of having passed the night wandering about Ham Common, she having been misdirected the previous evening by a fool of a railway porter, and not wishing to disturb the neighborhood by waking people up at two o'clock in the morning, which, in Mrs. Tupp's opinion, was sensible of her.

Mrs. Tupp describes the young lady as of agreeable manners, but looking, naturally, a bit washed out. The lady asked for Mr. Tupp, explaining that a friend of his was in trouble, which did not in the least surprise Mrs. Tupp, she herself not holding with Socialists and such like. Mr. Tupp, on being informed, dressed hastily and went downstairs, and he and the young lady left the house together. Mr. Tupp, on being questioned as to the name of his friend, had called up that it was no one Mrs. Tupp would know, a Mr. Quince—it may have been Quincey.

Mrs. Tupp is aware that Mr. Parable is also a Socialist, and is acquainted with the saying about thieves hanging together; but has worked for Mr. Parable for years and has always found him a most satisfactory client;

and, Mr. Tupp appearing at this point, our representative thanked Mrs. Tupp for her information and took his departure.

Mr. Horatius Condor, Jr., who consented to partake of luncheon in company with our representative at the Holborn Restaurant, was at first disinclined to be of much assistance, but eventually supplied our representative with the following information:

My relationship to Mr. Archibald Quincey, Harcourt Buildings, Temple, is perhaps a little difficult to define.

How he himself regards me I am never quite sure. There will be days together when we will be quite friendly-like, and at other times he will be that offhanded and peremptory you might think I was his blooming office boy.

On Friday morning, the twenty-eighth, I didn't get to Harcourt Buildings at the usual time, knowing that Mr. Quincey would not be there himself, he having arranged to interview Mr. Parable for the *Daily Chronicle* at ten o'clock. I allowed him half an hour, to be quite safe, and he came in at a quarter past eleven.

He took no notice of me. For about ten minutes—it may have been less—he walked up and down the room, cursing and swearing and kicking the furniture about. He landed an occasional walnut table in the middle of my shins, upon which I took the opportunity of wishing him "Good morning," and he sort of woke up, as you might say.

"How did the interview go off?" I says. "Got anything interesting?"

"Yes," he says; "quite interesting. Oh, yes, decidedly interesting."

He was holding himself in, if you understand, speaking with horrible slowness and deliberation.

"D'you know where he was last night?" he asks me.

"Yes," I says; "Caxton Hall, wasn't

it?—meeting to demand the release of Miss Clebb."

He leans across the table till his face was within a few inches of mine.

"Guess again," he says.

"I wasn't doing any guessing. He had hurt me with the walnut table, and I was feeling a bit short-tempered.

"Oh! don't make a game of it," I says. "It's too early in the morning."

"At the Earl's Court Exhibition," he says; "dancing the tango with a lady that he picked up in St. James' Park."

"Well," I says, "why not? He don't often get much fun." I thought it best to treat it lightly.

He takes no notice of my observation.

"A rival comes upon the scene," he continues—"a fat-headed ass, according to my information—and they have a stand-up fight. He gets run in and spends the night in a Vine Street police cell."

I suppose I was grinning without knowing it.

"Funny, ain't it?" he says.

"Well," I says, "it has its humorous side, hasn't it? What'll he get?"

"I am not worrying about what *he* is going to get," he answers back. "I am worrying about what *I* am going to get."

I thought he had gone dotty.

"What's it got to do with you?" I says.

"If old Wotherspoon is in a good humor," he continues, "and the constable's head has gone down a bit between now and Wednesday, I may get off with forty shillings and a public reprimand.

"On the other hand," he goes on—he was working himself into a sort of fit—"if the constable's head goes on swelling, and old Wotherspoon's liver gets worse, I've got to be prepared for a month without the option. That is, if I am fool enough——"

He had left both the doors open,

which in the daytime we generally do, our chambers being at the top. Miss Dorton—that's Mr. Parable's secretary—barges into the room. She didn't seem to notice me. She staggers to a chair and bursts into tears.

"He's gone," she says; "he's taken cook with him and gone."

"Gone!" says the gov'nor. "Where's he gone?"

"To Fingest," she says through her sobs—"to the cottage. Miss Bulstrode came in just after you had left," she says. "He wants to get away from every one and have a few days' quiet. And then he is coming back, and he is going to do it himself."

"Do what?" says the gov'nor, irritablelike.

"Fourteen days," she wails. "It'll kill him."

"But the case doesn't come on till Wednesday," says the gov'nor. "How do you know it's going to be fourteen days?"

"Miss Bulstrode," she says, "she's seen the magistrate. He says he always gives fourteen days in cases of unprovoked assault."

"But it wasn't unprovoked," says the gov'nor. "The other man began it by knocking off his hat. It was self-defense."

"She put that to him," she says, "and he agreed that that would alter his view of the case. But, you see," she continues, "we can't find the other man. He isn't likely to come forward of his own accord."

"The girl must know," says the gov'nor—"this girl he picks up in St. James' Park, and goes dancing with. The man must have been some friend of hers."

"But we can't find her either," she says. "He doesn't even know her name—he can't remember it."

"You will do it, won't you?" she says.

"Do what?" says the gov'nor again.

"The fourteen days," she says.

"But I thought you said he was going to do it himself?" he says.

"But he mustn't," she says. "Miss Bulstrode is coming around to see you. Think of it! Think of the headlines in the papers," she says. "Think of the Fabian Society. Think of the Suffrage cause. We mustn't let him."

"What about me?" says the gov'nor. "Doesn't anybody care for me?"

"You don't matter," she says. "Besides," she says, "with your influence you'll be able to keep it out of the papers. If it comes out that it was Mr. Parable, nothing on earth will be able to."

The gov'nor was almost as much excited by this time as she was.

"I'll see the Fabian Society and the Women's Vote and the Home for Lost Cats at Battersea and all the rest of the blessed bag of tricks——"

I'd been thinking to myself, and had just worked it out.

"What's he want to take his cook down with him for?" I says.

"To cook for him," says the gov'nor. "What d'you generally want a cook for?"

"Rats!" I says. "Does he usually take his cook with him?"

"No," answered Miss Dorton. "Now I come to think of it, he has always hitherto put up with Mrs. Meadows."

"You will find the lady down at Fingest," I says, "sitting opposite him and enjoying a *recherché* dinner for two."

The gov'nor slaps me on the back, and lifts Miss Dorton out of her chair.

"You get on back," he says, "and telephone to Miss Bulstrode. I'll be round at half past twelve."

Miss Dorton went out in a dazed sort of condition, and the gov'nor gives me a sovereign, and tells me I can have the rest of the day to myself.

Mr. Condor, Jr., considers that what happened subsequently goes to

prove that he was right more than it proves that he was wrong.

Mr. Condor, Jr., also promised to send us a photograph of himself for reproduction, but, unfortunately, up to the time of going to press it had not arrived.

From Mrs. Meadows, widow of the late Corporal John Meadows, V.C., Turberville, Bucks, the following further particulars were obtained by our local representative:

I have done for Mr. Parable now for some years past, my cottage being only a mile off, which makes it easy for me to look after him.

Mr. Parable likes the place to be always ready so that he can drop in when he chooses, he sometimes giving me warning and sometimes not. It was about the end of last month—on a Friday, if I remember rightly—that he suddenly turned up.

As a rule, he walks from Henley station, but on this occasion he arrived in a fly, he having a young woman with him, and she having a bag—his cook, as he explained to me. As a rule, I do everything for Mr. Parable, sleeping in the cottage when he is there; but to tell the truth, I was glad to see her. I never was much of a cook myself, as my poor dead husband has remarked on more than one occasion, and I don't pretend to be. Mr. Parable added, apologeticlike, that he had been suffering lately from indigestion.

"I am only too pleased to see her," I says. "There are the two beds in my room, and we shan't quarrel." She was quite a sensible young woman, as I had judged from the first look at her, though suffering at the time from a cold. She hires a bicycle from Emma Tidd, who only uses it on a Sunday, and, taking a market basket, off she starts for Henley, Mr. Parable saying he would go with her to show her the way.

They were gone a goodish time, which, seeing it's eight miles, didn't so much surprise me; and when they got back we all three had dinner together, Mr. Parable, arguing that it made for what he called "labor saving." Afterward I cleared away, leaving them talking together; and later on they had a walk round the garden, it being a moonlight night, but a bit too cold for my fancy.

In the morning I had a chat with her before he was down. She seemed a bit worried.

"I hope people won't get talking," she says. "He would insist on my coming."

"Well," I says, "surely a gent can bring his cook along with him to cook for him. And as for people talking, what I always say is, one may just as well give them something to talk about and save them the trouble of making it up."

"If only I was a plain, middle-aged woman," she says, "it would be all right."

"Perhaps you will be, all in good time," I says, but, of course, I could see what she was driving at. A nice, clean, pleasant-faced young woman she was, and not of the ordinary class. "Meanwhile," I says, "if you don't mind taking a bit of motherly advice, you might remember that your place is the kitchen, and his the parlor. He's a dear good man, I know, but human nature is human nature, and it's no good pretending it isn't."

She and I had our breakfast together before he was up, so that when he came down he had to have his alone, but afterward she comes into the kitchen and closes the door.

"He wants to show me the way to High Wycombe," she says. "He will have it there are better shops at Wycombe. What ought I to do?"

My experience is that advising folks

to do what they don't want to do isn't the way to do it.

"What d'you think yourself?" I asked her.

"I feel like going with him," she says, "and making the most of every mile."

And then she began to cry.

"What's the harm!" she says. "I have heard him from a dozen platforms ridiculing class distinction. Besides," she says, "my people have been farmers for generations. What was Miss Bulstrode's father but a grocer? He ran a hundred shops instead of one. What difference does that make?"

"When did it all begin?" I says. "When did he first take notice of you like?"

"The day before yesterday," she answers. "He had never seen me before," she says. "I was just 'Cook'—something in a cap and apron that he passed occasionally on the stairs. On Thursday he saw me in my best clothes, and fell in love with me. He doesn't know it himself, poor dear, not yet, but that's what he's done."

Well, I couldn't contradict her, not after the way I had seen him looking at her across the table.

"What are your feelings toward him," I says, "to be quite honest? He's rather a good catch for a young person in your position."

"That's my trouble," she says. "I can't help thinking of that. And then to be 'Mrs. John Parable!' That's enough to turn a woman's head."

"He'd be a bit difficult to live with," I says.

"Geniuses always are," she says; "it's easy enough if you just think of them as children. He'd be a bit fractious at times, that's all. Underneath, he's just the kindest, dearest——"

"Oh, you take your basket and go to High Wycombe," I says. "He might be worse."

I wasn't expecting them back soon, and they didn't come back soon. In the

afternoon a motor stops at the gate, and out of it steps Miss Bulstrode, Miss Dorton—that's the young lady that writes for him—and Mr. Quincey. I told them I couldn't say when he'd be back, and they said it didn't matter, they just happening to be passing.

"Did anybody call on him yesterday?" asks Miss Bulstrode, carelessly—"a lady?"

"No," I says; "you are the first as yet."

"He's brought his cook down with him, hasn't he?" says Mr. Quincey.

"Yes," I says, "and a very good cook too," which was the truth.

"I'd like just to speak a few words with her," says Miss Bulstrode.

"Sorry, ma'am," I says, "but she's out at present; she's gone to Wycombe."

"Gone to Wycombe!" they all says together.

"To market," I says. "It's a little farther, but, of course, it stands to reason the shops there are better."

They looked at one another.

"That settles it," says Mr. Quincey. "Delicacies worthy to be set before her not available nearer than Wycombe, but must be had. There's going to be a pleasant little dinner here to-night."

"The hussy!" says Miss Bulstrode, under her breath.

They whispered together for a moment, then they turns to me.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Meadows," says Mr. Quincey. "You needn't say we called. He wanted to be alone and it might vex him."

I said I wouldn't, and I didn't. They climbed back into the motor and went off.

Before dinner I had a call to go into the woodshed. I heard a scuttling as I opened the door. If I am not mistaken, Miss Dorton was hiding in the corner where we keep the coke. I didn't see any good in making a fuss, so I left her there. When I got back to the

kitchen, cook asked me if we'd got any parsley.

"You'll find a bit in the front," I says, "to the left of the gate," and she went out. She came back looking scared.

"Anybody keep goats round here?" she asked me.

"Not that I know of, nearer than Ibstone Common," I says.

"I could have sworn I saw a goat's face looking at me out of the gooseberry bushes while I was picking the parsley," she says. "It had a beard."

"It's the half light," I says. "One can imagine anything."

"I do hope I'm not getting nervy," she says.

I thought I'd have another look around, and made the excuse that I wanted a pail of water. I was stooping over the well, which is just under the mulberry tree, when something fell close to me and lodged upon the bricks. It was a hairpin. I fixed the cover carefully upon the well in case of accident, and when I got in I went round myself and was careful to see that all the curtains were drawn.

Just before we three sat down to dinner again I took cook aside.

"I shouldn't go for any stroll in the garden to-night," I says. "People from the village may be about, and we don't want them gossiping." And she thanked me.

Next night they were there again. I thought I wouldn't spoil the dinner, but mention it afterward. I saw to it again that the curtains were drawn, and slipped the catch of both the doors. And just as well that I did.

I had always heard that Mr. Parable was an amusing speaker, but on previous visits had not myself noticed it. But this time he seemed ten years younger than I had ever known him before; and during dinner, while we were talking and laughing quite merrylike, I had the feeling more than once that

people were meandering about outside. I had just finished clearing away, and cook was making the coffee, when there came a knock at the door.

"Who's that?" says Mr. Parable. "I am not at home to any one."

"I'll see," I says. And on my way I slipped into the kitchen.

"Coffee for one, cook," I says, and she understood. Her cap and apron were hanging behind the door. I flung them across to her, and she caught them; and then I opened the front door.

They pushed past me without speaking, and went straight into the parlor. And they didn't waste many words on him either.

"Where is she?" asked Miss Bulstrode.

"Where's who?" says Mr. Parable.

"Don't lie about it," said Miss Bulstrode, making no effort to control herself. "The hussy you've been dining with?"

"Do you mean Mrs. Meadows?" says Mr. Parable.

I thought she was going to shake him.

"Where have you hidden her?" she says.

It was at that moment cook entered with the coffee.

If they had taken the trouble to look at her they might have had an idea. The tray was trembling in her hands, and in her haste and excitement she had put on her cap the wrong way round. But she kept control of her voice, and asked if she should bring some more coffee.

"Ah, yes! You'd all like some coffee, wouldn't you?" says Mr. Parable. Miss Bulstrode did not reply, but Mr. Quincey said he was cold and would like it. It was a nasty night, with a thin rain.

"Thank you, sir," says cook, and we went out together.

Cottages are only cottages, and if

people in the parlor persist in talking loudly, people in the kitchen can't very well help overhearing.

There was a good deal of talk about "fourteen days," which Mr. Parable said he was going to do himself, and which Miss Dorton said he mustn't, because, if he did, it would be a victory for the enemies of humanity. Mr. Parable said something about "humanity," which I didn't rightly hear, but, whatever it was, it started Miss Dorton crying; and Miss Bulstrode called Mr. Parable a "blind Samson," who had had his hair cut by a designing minx who had been hired to do it.

It was all French to me, but cook was drinking in every word, and when she returned from taking them in their coffee she made no bones about it, but took up her place at the door with her ear to the keyhole.

It was Mr. Quincey who got them all quiet, and then he began to explain things. It seemed that if they could only find a certain gentleman and persuade him to come forward and acknowledge that he began a row, that then all would be well. Mr. Quincey would be fined forty shillings, and Mr. Parable's name would never appear. Failing that, Mr. Parable, according to Mr. Quincey, could do his fourteen days himself.

"I've told you once," says Mr. Parable, "and I tell you again, that I don't know the man's name, and can't give it you."

"We are not asking you to," says Mr. Quincey. "You give us the name of your tango partner, and we'll do the rest."

I could see cook's face; I had got a bit interested myself, and we were both close to the door. She hardly seemed to be breathing.

"I am sorry," says Mr. Parable, speaking very deliberately, "but I am not going to have her name dragged into this business."

"It wouldn't be," says Mr. Quincey. "All we want to get out of her is the name and address of the gentleman who was so anxious to see her home."

"Who was he?" says Miss Bulstrode. "Her husband?"

"No," says Mr. Parable; "he wasn't."

"Then who was he?" says Miss Bulstrode. "He must have been something to her—fiancé?"

"I am going to do the fourteen days myself," says Mr. Parable. "I shall come out all the fresher after a fortnight's complete rest and change."

Cook leaves the door with a smile on her face that made her look quite beautiful, and, taking some paper from the dresser drawer, began to write a letter.

They went on talking in the other room for another ten minutes, and then Mr. Parable lets them out himself, and goes a little way with them. When he came back we could hear him walking up and down the other room.

She had written and stamped the envelope; it was lying on the table.

"Joseph Onions, Esq.," I says, reading the address. "'Auctioneer and House Agent, Broadway, Hammer-smith.' Is that the young man?"

"That is the young man," she says, folding her letter and putting it in the envelope.

"And was he your fiancé?" I asked.

"No," she says. "But he will be if he does what I'm telling him to do."

"And what about Mr. Parable?" I says.

"A little joke that will amuse him later on," she says, slipping a cloak on her shoulders. "How once he nearly married his cook."

"I shan't be a minute," she says. And, with the letter in her hand she slips out.

Mrs. Meadows, we understand, has expressed indignation at our publication of this interview, she being under the impression that she was simply hav-

ing a friendly gossip with a neighbor. Our representative, however, is sure he explained to Mrs. Meadows that his visit was official; and, in any case, our duty to the public must be held to exonerate us from all blame in the matter.

Mr. Joseph Onions, of the Broadway, Hammersmith, auctioneer and house agent, expressed himself to our representative as most surprised at the turn that events had subsequently taken. The letter that Mr. Onions received from Miss Comfort Price was explicit and definite. It was to the effect that if he would call upon a certain Mr. Quincey, of Harcourt Buildings, Temple, and acknowledge that it was he who began the row at the Earl's Court Exhibition on the evening of the twenty-seventh, that then the engagement between himself and Miss Price, hitherto unacknowledged by the lady, might be regarded as a fact.

Mr. Onions, who describes himself as essentially a business man, decided before complying with Miss Price's request to take a few preliminary steps. As the result of judiciously conducted inquiries, first at the Vine Street Police Court, and secondly at Twickenham, Mr. Onions arrived later in the day at Mr. Quincey's chambers, with, to use his own expression, all the cards in his hand. It was Mr. Quincey who, professing himself unable to comply with Mr. Onions' suggestion, arranged the interview with Miss Bulstrode. And it was Miss Bulstrode herself who, on condition that Mr. Onions added to the undertaking the further condition that he would marry Miss Price before the end of the month, offered to make it two hundred. It was in their joint interest—Mr. Onions regarding himself and Miss Price as now one—that Mr. Onions suggested her making it three, using such arguments as, under the circumstances, naturally occurred to him

—as, for example, the damage caused to the lady's reputation by the whole proceedings, culminating in a night spent by the lady, according to her own account, on Ham Common. That the price demanded was reasonable Mr. Onions considers as proved by Miss Bulstrode's eventual acceptance of his terms. That, having got out of him all that he wanted, Mr. Quincey should have "considered it his duty" to communicate the entire details of the transaction to Miss Price, through the mention of Mr. Andrews, thinking it "as well she should know the character of the man she proposed to marry," Mr. Onions considers a gross breach of etiquette as between gentlemen; and having regard to Miss Price's after behavior, Mr. Onions can only say that she is not the girl he took her for.

Mr. Aaron Andrews, on whom our representative called, was desirous at first of not being drawn into the matter; but on our representative explaining to him that our only desire was to contradict false rumors likely to be harmful to Mr. Parable's reputation, Mr. Andrews saw the necessity of putting our representative in possession of the truth.

She came back on Tuesday afternoon, explained Mr. Andrews, and I had a talk with her.

"It is all right, Mr. Andrews," she told me; "they've been in communication with my young man, and Miss Bulstrode has seen the magistrate privately. The case will be dismissed with a fine of forty shillings, and Mr. Quincey has arranged to keep it out of the papers."

"Well, all's well that ends well," I answered; "but it might have been better, my girl, if you had mentioned that young man of yours a bit earlier."

"I did not know it was of any importance," she explained. "Mr. Par-

able told me nothing. If it hadn't been for chance, I should never have known what was happening."

I had always liked the young woman. Mr. Quincey had suggested my waiting till after Wednesday. But there seemed to me no particular object in delay.

"Are you fond of him?" I asked her.

"Yes," she answered; "I am fonder than——" And then she stopped herself suddenly and flared scarlet. "Who are you talking about?" she demanded.

"This young man of yours," I said.

"Mr.—what's his name—Onions?"

"Oh, that!" she answered. "Oh, yes; he's all right."

"And if he wasn't?" I said, and she looked at me hard.

"I told him," she said, "that if he would do what I asked him to do, I'd marry him. And he seems to have done it."

"There are ways of doing everything," I said; and, seeing it wasn't going to break her heart, I told her just the plain facts. She listened without a word, and when I had finished she put her arms round my neck and kissed me. I am old enough to be her grandfather, but twenty years ago it might have upset me.

"I think I shall be able to save Miss Bulstrode that three hundred pounds," she laughed, and ran upstairs and changed her things. When later I looked into the kitchen she was humming.

Mr. John came up by the car, and I could see he was in one of his moods.

"Pack me some things for a walking tour," he said. "Don't forget the knapsack. I am going to Scotland by the eight thirty."

"Will you be away long?" I asked him.

"It depends upon how long it takes me," he answered. "When I come back I am going to be married."

"Who is the lady?" I asked, though, of course, I knew.

"Miss Bulstrode," he said.

"Well," I said, "she——"

"That will do," he said; "I have had all that from the three of them for the last two days. She is a Socialist, and a Suffragist, and all the rest of it, and my ideal helpmate. She is well off, and that will enable me to devote all my time to putting the world to rights without bothering about anything else. Our home will be the nursery of advanced ideas. We shall share together the joys and delights of the public platform. What more can any man want?"

"You will want your dinner early," I said, "if you are going by the eight thirty. I had better tell cook——"

He interrupted me again.

"You can tell cook to go to the devil," he said.

I naturally stared at him.

"She is going to marry a beastly little rotter of a rent collector that she doesn't care a damn for," he went on.

I could not understand why he seemed so mad about it.

"I don't see, in any case, what it's got to do with you," I said, "but, as a matter of fact, she isn't."

"Isn't what?" he said, stopping short and turning on me.

"Isn't going to marry him," I answered.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"Better ask her," I suggested.

I didn't know at the time that it was a silly thing to say, and I am not sure that I should not have said it if I had. When he is in one of his moods I always seem to get into one of mine. I have looked after Mr. John ever since he was a baby, so that we do not either of us treat the other quite as perhaps we ought to.

"Tell cook I want her," he said.

"She is just in the middle——" I began.

"I don't care where she is," he said.

He seemed determined never to let me finish a sentence. "Send her up here."

She was in the kitchen by herself.

"He wants to see you at once," I said.

"Who does?" she asked.

"Mr. John," I said.

"What's he want to see me for?" she asked.

"How do I know?" I answered.

"But you do," she said. She always had an obstinate twist in her, and, feeling it would save time, I told her what had happened.

"Well," I said, "aren't you going?"

She was standing stock still staring at the pastry she was making. She turned to me, and there was a curious smile about her lips.

"Do you know what you ought to be

wearing?" she said. "Wings, and a little bow and arrow."

She didn't even think to wipe her hands, but went straight upstairs. It was about half an hour later when the bell rang. Mr. John was standing by the window.

"Is that bag ready?" he said.

"It will be," I said.

I went out into the hall and returned with the clothes brush.

"What are you going to do?" he said.

"Perhaps you don't know it," I said, "but you are all over flour."

"Cook's going with me to Scotland," he said.

I have looked after Mr. John ever since he was a boy. He was forty-two last birthday, but when I shook hands with him through the cab window I could have sworn he was twenty-five again.

The Honorable Mrs. Pinmoney on Fashion

Tastes, feelings, and character! Why, my love, you really do seem to believe yourself in the age of chivalry, when those words really signified very essential differences. But now, the matter is, very happily, simplified. Tastes—they depend on the fashion. There is always a fashionable taste: a taste for driving the mail—a taste for acting Hamlet—a taste for philosophical lectures—a taste for the marvelous—a taste for the simple—a taste for the brilliant—a taste for the somber—a taste for the tender—a taste for the grim—a taste for banditti—a taste for ghosts—a taste for the devil—a taste for French dancers and Italian singers, and German whiskers and tragedies—a taste for enjoying the country in November, and wintering in London till the end of the dog days—a taste for making shoes—a taste for picturesque tours—a taste for taste itself, or for essays on taste—but no gentleman would be so rash as to have a taste of his own, or his last winter's taste, or any taste, my love, but the fashionable taste. Poor dear Mr. Pinmoney was reckoned a man of exquisite taste among all his acquaintance; for the new taste, let it be what it would, always fitted him as well as his new coat, and he was the very pink and mirror of fashion, as much in the one as the other. So much for tastes, my dear. Now as for feelings, my dear, you know there are no such things in the fashionable world. Feelings are very troublesome things, and always stand in the way of a person's own interests. Then, as to character, a gentleman's character is usually in the keeping of his banker, or his steward, or his solicitor; and if they can certify and demonstrate that he was the means of keeping a handsome equipage, and a town and country house, and of giving routes and dinners, and of making a good settlement on the happy object of his choice—what more of any gentleman's character would you desire to know?—*Thomas Love Peacock.*

by
W. Somerset Maugham
Author of *'Rain'*



RED

THE skipper thrust his hand into one of his trouser pockets and with difficulty, for they were not at the sides but in front and he was a portly man, pulled out a large silver watch. He looked at it and then looked again at the declining sun. The Kanaka at the wheel gave him a glance, but did not speak. The skipper's eyes rested on the island they were approaching. A white line of foam marked the reef. He knew there was an opening large enough to get his ship through, and when they came a little nearer he counted on seeing it. They had nearly an hour of daylight still before them. In the lagoon the water was deep and they could anchor comfortably. The chief of the village which he could already see among the coconut trees was a friend of the mate, and it would be pleasant to go ashore for the night. The mate came forward at that moment and the skipper turned to him.

"We'll take a bottle of booze along with us and get some girls in to dance," he said.

"I don't see the opening," said the mate.

He was a Kanaka, a handsome, swarthy fellow, with somewhat the look of a later Roman emperor, inclined to stoutness; but his face was fine and clean cut.

"I'm dead sure there's one right here," said the captain, looking through his glasses. "I can't understand why I can't pick it up. Send one of the boys up the mast to have a look."

The mate called one of the crew and gave him the order. The captain watched the Kanaka climb and waited for him to speak. But the Kanaka shouted down that he could see nothing but the unbroken line of foam. The captain spoke Samoan like a native, and he cursed him freely.

"Shall he stay up there?" asked the mate.

"What the hell good does that do?" answered the captain. "The blame fool can't see worth a cent. You bet your sweet life I'd find the opening if I was up there."

He looked at the slender mast with anger. It was all very well for a native who had been used to climbing up coconut trees all his life. He was fat and heavy.

"Come down," he shouted. "You're no more use than a dead dog. We'll just have to go along the reef till we find the opening."

It was a seventy-ton schooner with paraffin auxiliary, and it ran, when there was no head wind, between four and five knots an hour. It was a bedraggled object; it had been painted white a very long time ago, but it was now dirty, dingy, and mottled. It smelt strongly of paraffin and of the copra which was its usual cargo. They were within a hundred feet of the reef now and the captain told the steersman to run along it till they came to the opening. But when they had gone a couple of miles he realized that they had missed it. He went about and slowly worked back again. The white foam of the reef continued without interruption and now the sun was setting. With a curse at the stupidity of the crew the skipper resigned himself to waiting till next morning.

"Put her about," he said. "I can't anchor here."

They went out to sea a little and presently it was quite dark. They anchored. When the sail was furled the ship began to roll a good deal. They said in Apia that one day she would roll right over; and the owner, a German-American who managed one of the largest stores, said that no money was big enough to induce him to go out in her. The cook, a Chinese in white trousers, very dirty and ragged, and a thin white tunic, came to say that supper was ready, and when the skipper went into the cabin he found the engineer already seated at table. The engineer was a long, lean man with a scraggy neck. He was dressed in blue overalls and a sleeveless jersey which

showed his thin arms tattooed from elbow to wrist.

"Hell, having to spend the night outside," said the skipper.

The engineer did not answer, and they ate their supper in silence. The cabin was lit by a dim oil lamp. When they had eaten the canned apricots with which the meal finished the chink brought them a cup of tea. The skipper lit a cigar and went on the upper deck. The island now was only a darker mass against the night. The stars were very bright. The only sound was the ceaseless breaking of the surf. The skipper sank into a deck chair and smoked idly. Presently three or four members of the crew came up and sat down. One of them had a banjo and another a concertina. They began to play, and one of them sang. The native song sounded strange on these instruments. Then to the singing a couple began to dance. It was a barbaric dance, savage and primeval, rapid, with quick movements of the hands and feet and contortions of the body; it was sensual, sexual even, but sexual without passion. It was very animal, direct, weird without mystery, natural in short, and one might almost say childlike. At last they grew tired. They stretched themselves on the deck and slept, and all was silent. The skipper lifted himself heavily out of his chair and clambered down the companion. He went into his cabin and got out of his clothes. He climbed into his bunk and lay there. He panted a little in the heat of the night.

But next morning, when the dawn crept over the tranquil sea, the opening in the reef which had eluded them the night before was seen a little to the east of where they lay. The schooner entered the lagoon. There was not a ripple on the surface of the water. Deep down among the coral rocks you saw little colored fish swim. When he had anchored his ship the skipper ate his breakfast and went on deck.

The sun shone from an unclouded sky, but in the early morning the air was grateful and cool. It was Sunday, and there was a feeling of quietness, a silence as though nature were at rest, which gave him a peculiar sense of comfort. He sat, looking at the wooded coast, and felt lazy and well at ease. Presently a slow smile moved his lips and he threw the stump of his cigar into the water.

"I guess I'll go ashore," he said. "Get the boat out."

He climbed stiffly down the ladder and was rowed to a little cove. The coconut trees came down to the water's edge, not in rows, but spaced out with an ordered formality. They were like a ballet of spinsters, elderly but flip-pant, standing in affected attitudes with the simpering graces of a bygone age. He sauntered idly through them, along a path that could be just seen winding its tortuous way, and it led him presently to a broad creek. There was a bridge across it, but a bridge constructed of single trunks of coconut trees, a dozen of them, placed end to end and supported where they met by a forked branch driven into the bed of the creek. You walked on a smooth, round surface, narrow and slippery, and there was no support for the hand. To cross such a bridge required sure feet and a stout heart. The skipper hesitated. But he saw on the other side, nestling among the trees, a white man's house; he made up his mind and, rather gingerly, began to walk. He watched his feet carefully, and where one trunk joined onto the next and there was a difference of level, he tottered a little. It was with a gasp of relief that he reached the last tree and finally set his feet on the firm ground of the other side. He had been so intent on the difficult crossing that he never noticed any one was watching him, and it was with surprise that he heard himself spoken to.

"It takes a bit of nerve to cross these bridges when you're not used to them."

He looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. He had evidently come out of the house which he had seen.

"I saw you hesitate," the man continued, with a smile on his lips, "and I was watching to see you fall in."

"Not on your life," said the captain, who had now recovered his confidence.

"I've fallen in myself before now. I remember, one evening I came back from shooting, and I fell in, gun and all. Now I get a boy to carry my gun for me."

He was a man no longer young, with a small beard, now somewhat gray, and a thin face. He was dressed in a singlet, without arms, and a pair of duck trousers. He wore neither shoes nor socks. He spoke English with a slight accent.

"Are you Neilson?" asked the skipper.

"I am."

"I've heard about you. I thought you lived somewheres round here."

The skipper followed his host into the little bungalow and sat down heavily in the chair which the other motioned him to take. While Neilson went out to fetch whisky and glasses he took a look round the room. It filled him with amazement. He had never seen so many books. The shelves reached from floor to ceiling on all four walls, and they were closely packed. There was a grand piano littered with music, and a large table on which books and magazines lay in disorder. The room made him feel embarrassed. He remembered that Neilson was a queer fellow. No one knew very much about him, although he had been in the islands for so many years, but those who knew him agreed that he was queer. He was a Swede.

"You've got one big heap of books here," he said, when Neilson returned.

"They do no harm," answered Neilson with a smile.

"Have you read them all?" asked the skipper.

"Most of them."

"I'm a bit of a reader myself. I have the *Saturday Evening Post* sent me reglar."

Neilson poured his visitor a good stiff glass of whisky and gave him a cigar. The skipper volunteered a little information.

"I got in last night, but I couldn't find the opening, so I had to anchor outside. I never been this run before, but my people had some stuff they wanted to bring over here. Gray, d'you know him?"

"Yes, he's got a store a little way along."

"Well, there was a lot of canned stuff that he wanted over, an' he's got some copra. They thought I might just as well come over as lie idle at Apia. I run between Apia and Pago-Pago mostly, but they've got smallpox there just now, and there's nothing stirring."

He took a drink of his whisky and lit a cigar. He was a taciturn man, but there was something in Neilson that made him nervous, and his nervousness made him talk. The Swede was looking at him with large dark eyes in which there was an expression of faint amusement.

"This is a tidy little place you've got here."

"I've done my best with it."

"You must do pretty well with your trees. They look fine. With copra at the price it is now. I had a bit of a plantation myself once, in Upolu it was, but I had to sell it."

He looked round the room again, where all those books gave him a feeling of something incomprehensible and hostile.

"I guess you must find it a bit lonesome here though," he said.

"I've got used to it. I've been here for twenty-five years."

Now the captain could think of nothing more to say, and he smoked in silence. Neilson had apparently no wish to break it. He looked at his guest with a meditative eye. The skipper was a tall man, more than six feet high, and very stout. His face was red and blotchy, with a network of little purple veins on the cheeks, and his features were sunk into its fatness. His eyes were bloodshot. His neck was buried in rolls of fat. But for a fringe of long curly hair, nearly white, at the back of his head, he was quite bald; and that immense, shiny surface of forehead, which might have given him a false look of intelligence, on the contrary gave him one of peculiar imbecility. He wore a blue-flannel shirt, open at the neck and showing his fat chest covered with a mat of reddish hair, and a very old pair of blue-serge trousers. He sat in his chair in a heavy, ungainly attitude, his great belly thrust forward and his fat legs uncrossed. All elasticity had gone from his limbs. Neilson wondered idly what sort of man he had been in his youth. It was almost impossible to imagine that this creature of vast bulk had ever been a boy who ran about. The skipper finished his whisky, and Neilson pushed the bottle toward him.

"Help yourself."

The skipper leaned forward and with his great hand seized it.

"And how come you in these parts, anyways?" he said.

"Oh, I came out to the islands for my health. My lungs were bad and they said I hadn't a year to live. You see they were wrong."

"I meant, how come you to settle down right here?"

"I am a sentimentalist."

"Oh!"

Neilson knew that the skipper had not an idea what he meant, and he

looked at him with an ironical twinkle in his dark eyes. Perhaps just because the skipper was so gross and dull a man the whim seized him to talk further.

"You were too busy keeping your balance to notice, when you crossed the bridge, but this spot is generally considered rather pretty."

"It's a cute little house you've got here."

"Ah, that wasn't here when I first came. There was a native hut, with its beehive roof and its pillars, overshadowed by a great tree with red flowers; and the croton bushes, their leaves yellow and red and golden, maybe a pied fence around it. And then all about were the coconut trees, as fanciful as women, and as vain. They stood at the water's edge and spent all day looking at their reflections. I was a young man then—good heavens! it's a quarter of a century ago—and I wanted to enjoy all the loveliness of the world in the short time allotted to me before I passed into the darkness. I thought it was the most beautiful spot I had ever seen. The first time I saw it I had a catch at my heart, and I was afraid I was going to cry. I wasn't more than twenty-five, and though I put the best face I could on it, I didn't want to die. And somehow it seemed to me that the very beauty of this place made it easier for me to accept my fate. I felt when I came here that all my past life had fallen away. Stockholm and its university, and then Bonn: it all seemed the life of somebody else, as though now at last I had achieved the reality which our doctors of philosophy—I am one myself, you know—had discussed so much. 'A year,' I cried to myself. 'I have a year. I will spend it here and then I am content to die.'

"We are foolish and sentimental and melodramatic at twenty-five, but, if we

weren't, perhaps we should be less wise at fifty.

"Now drink, my friend. Don't let the nonsense I talk interfere with you."

He waved his thin hand toward the bottle, and the skipper finished what remained in his glass.

"You ain't drinking nothin'," he said, reaching for the whisky.

"I am of sober habit," smiled the Swede. "I intoxicate myself in ways which I fancy are more subtle. But perhaps that is only vanity. Anyhow, the effects are more lasting and the results less deleterious."

"They say there's a deal of cocaine taken in the States now," said the captain.

Neilson chuckled.

"But I do not see a white man often," he continued, "and for once I don't think a drop of whisky can do me any harm."

He poured himself out a little, added some soda, and took a sip.

"And presently I found out why the spot had such an unearthly loveliness. Here love had tarried for a moment like a migrant bird that happens on a ship in mid-ocean and for a little while folds its tired wings. The fragrance of a beautiful passion hovered over it like the fragrance of hawthorn in May in the meadows of my home. It seems to me that the places where men have loved or suffered keep about them always some faint aroma of something that has not wholly died. It is as though they had acquired a spiritual significance which mysteriously affects those who pass. I wish I could make myself clear." He smiled a little. "Though I cannot imagine that, if I did, you would understand."

He paused.

"I think this place was beautiful because here I had been loved beautifully." And now he shrugged his shoulders. "But perhaps it is only that my aesthetic sense is gratified by the happy

conjunction of young love and a suitable setting."

Even a man less thick-witted than the skipper might have been forgiven if he were bewildered by Neilson's words. For he seemed faintly to laugh at what he said. It was as though he spoke from emotion which his intellect found ridiculous. He had said himself that he was a sentimentalist, and when sentimentality is joined with skepticism there is often the devil to pay.

He was silent for an instant and looked at the captain with eyes in which there was a sudden perplexity.

"You know, I can't help thinking that I've seen you before somewhere or other," he said.

"I couldn't say as I remember you," returned the skipper.

"I have a curious feeling as though your face were familiar to me. It's been puzzling me for some time. But I can't situate my recollection in any place or at any time."

The skipper massively shrugged his heavy shoulders.

"It's thirty years since I first come to the islands. A man can't figure on remembering all the folk he meets in a while like that."

The Swede shook his head.

"You know how one sometimes has the feeling that a place one has never been to before is strangely familiar. That's how I seem to see you." He gave a whimsical smile. "Perhaps I knew you in some past existence. Perhaps—perhaps you were the master of a galley in ancient Rome and I was a slave at the oar. Thirty years have you been here?"

"Every bit of thirty years."

"I wonder if you knew a man called Red?"

"Red?"

"That is the only name I've ever known him by. I never knew him personally. I never even set eyes on him. And yet I seem to see him more clearly

than many men—my brothers, for instance—with whom I passed my daily life for many years. He lives in my imagination with the distinctness of a Paolo Malatesta or a Romeo. But I dare say you have never read Dante or Shakespeare?"

"I can't say as I have," said the captain. Neilson, smoking a cigar, leaned back in his chair and looked vacantly at the ring of smoke which floated in the still air. A smile played on his lips, but his eyes were grave. Then he looked at the captain. There was in his gross obesity something extraordinarily repellent. He had the plethoric self-satisfaction of the very fat. It was an outrage. It set Neilson's nerves on edge. But the contrast between the man before him and the man he had in mind was pleasant.

"It appears that Red was the most comely thing you ever saw. I've talked to quite a number of people who knew him in those days, white men, and they all agree that the first time you saw him his beauty just took your breath away. They called him 'Red' on account of his flaming hair. It had a natural wave and he wore it long. It must have been of that wonderful color that the pre-Raphaelites raved over. I don't think he was vain of it, he was much too ingenuous for that, but no one could have blamed him if he had been. He was tall, six feet and an inch or two—in the native house that used to stand here, was the mark of his height cut with a knife on the central trunk that supported the roof—and he was made like a Greek god, broad in the shoulders and thin in the flanks; he was like Apollo, with just that soft roundness which Praxiteles gave him, and that suave, feminine grace which has in it something troubling and mysterious. His skin was dazzling white, milky, like satin; his skin was like a woman's."

"I had kind of a white skin myself

when I was a kiddie," said the skipper, with a twinkle in his bloodshot eyes.

But Neilson paid no attention to him. He was telling his story now and interruption made him impatient.

"And his face was just as beautiful as his body. He had large blue eyes, very dark, so that some say they were black, and unlike most red-haired people he had dark eyebrows and long dark lashes. His features were perfectly regular and his mouth was like a scarlet wound. He was twenty."

On these words the Swede stopped with a certain sense of the dramatic. He took a sip of whisky.

"He was unique. There never was any one more beautiful. There was no more reason for him than for a wonderful blossom to flower on a wild plant. He was a happy accident of nature.

"One day he landed at that cove into which you must have put this morning. He was an American sailor, and he had deserted from a man-of-war in Apia. He had induced some good-humored native to give him a passage on a cutter that happened to be sailing from Apia to Safoto, and he had been put ashore here in a dugout. I do not know why he deserted. Perhaps life on a man-of-war with its restrictions irked him, perhaps he was in trouble, and perhaps it was the South Seas and these romantic islands that got into his bones. Every now and then they take a man strangely, and he finds himself like a fly in a spider's web. It may be that there was a softness of fiber in him, and these green hills with their soft airs, this blue sea, took the Northern strength from him as Delilah took the Nazarite's. Anyhow, he wanted to hide himself, and he thought he would be safe in this secluded nook till his ship had sailed from Samoa.

A7 "There was a native hut at the cove and as he stood there, wondering where exactly he should turn his steps, a young

girl came out and invited him to enter. He knew scarcely two words of the native tongue and she as little English. But he understood well enough what her smiles meant, and her pretty gestures, and he followed her. He sat down on a mat and she gave him slices of pineapple to eat. I can speak of Red only from hearsay, but I saw the girl three years after he first met her, and she was scarcely nineteen then. You cannot imagine how exquisite she was. She had the passionate grace of the hibiscus and the rich color. She was rather tall, slim, with the delicate features of her race, and large eyes like pools of still water under the palm trees; her hair, black and curling, fell down her back, and she wore a wreath of scented flowers. Her hands were lovely. They were so small, so exquisitely formed, they gave your heart-strings a wrench. And in those days she laughed easily. Her smile was so delightful that it made your knees shake. Her skin was like a field of ripe corn on a summer day. Good heavens, how can I describe her? She was too beautiful to be real.

"And these two young things—she was sixteen and he was twenty—fell in love with one another at first sight. That is the real love, not the love that comes from sympathy, common interests, or intellectual community, but love pure and simple. That is the love that Adam felt for Eve when he awoke and found her in the garden gazing at him with dewy eyes. That is the love that draws the beasts to one another, and the gods. That is the love that makes the world a miracle. That is the love which gives life its pregnant meaning. You have never heard of the wise, cynical French duke who said that with two lovers there is always one who loves and one who lets himself be loved; it is a bitter truth to which most of us have to resign ourselves; but now and then there are two who love and

two who let themselves be loved. Then one might fancy that the sun stands still as it stood when Joshua prayed to the God of Israel.

"And even now after all these years, when I think of these two, so young, so fair, so simple, and of their love, I feel a pang. It tears my heart just as my heart is torn when on certain nights I watch the full moon shining on the lagoon from an unclouded sky. There is always pain in the contemplation of perfect beauty.

"They were children. She was good and sweet and kind. I know nothing of him, and I like to think that then at all events he was ingenuous and frank. I like to think that his soul was as comely as his body. But I dare say he had no more soul than the creatures of the woods and forests who made pipes from reeds and bathed in the mountain streams when the world was young, and you might catch sight of little fawns galloping through the glade on the back of a bearded centaur. A soul is a troublesome possession and when man developed it he lost the Garden of Eden.

"Well, when Red came to the island it had recently been visited by one of those epidemics which the white man has brought to the South Seas, and one third of the inhabitants had died. It seems that the girl had lost all her near kin and she lived now in the house of distant cousins. The household consisted of two ancient crones, bowed and wrinkled, two younger women, and a man and a boy. For a few days he stayed there. But perhaps he felt himself too near the shore, with the possibility that he might fall in with white men who would reveal his hiding place; perhaps the lovers could not bear that the company of others should rob them for an instant of the delight of being together. One morning they set out, the pair of them, with the few things that belonged to the girl, and walked

along a grassy path under the coconuts, till they came to the creek you see. They had to cross the bridge you crossed, and the girl laughed gleefully because he was afraid. She held his hand till they came to the end of the first tree, and then his courage failed him and he had to go back. He was obliged to take off all his clothes before he could risk it, and she carried them over for him on her head. They settled down in the empty hut that stood here. Whether she had any rights over it—land tenure is a complicated business in the islands—or whether the owner had died during the epidemic, I do not know, but anyhow, no one questioned them, and they took possession. Their furniture consisted of a couple of grass mats on which they slept, a fragment of looking-glass, and a bowl or two. In this pleasant land that is enough to start housekeeping on.

"They say that happy people have no history, and certainly a happy love has none. They did nothing all day long and yet the days seemed all too short. The girl had a native name, but Red called her Sally. He picked up the easy language very quickly, and he used to lie on the mat for hours while she chattered gayly to him. He was a silent fellow, and perhaps his mind was lethargic. He smoked incessantly the cigarettes which she made him out of the native tobacco and pandanus leaf, and he watched her while with deft fingers she made grass mats. Often natives would come in and tell long stories of the old days when the island was disturbed by tribal wars. Sometimes at night he would go out with a lantern to catch lobster. There were plantains round the hut and Sally would roast them for their frugal meal. She knew how to make delicious messes from coconuts, and the bread-fruit tree by the side of the creek gave them its fruit. On feast days they killed a little pig and cooked it on hot

stones. They bathed together in the creek; and in the evening they went down to the lagoon and paddled about in a dugout, with its great outrigger. The sea was deep blue, wine colored at sundown, like the sea of Homeric Greece; but in the lagoon the color had an infinite variety, aquamarine and amethyst and emerald; and the setting sun turned it for a short moment to liquid gold. Then there was the color of the coral, brown, white, pink, red, purple; and the shapes it took were marvelous. It was like a magic garden, and the hurrying fish were like butterflies. It strangely lacked reality. Among the coral were pools with a floor of white sand and here, where the water was dazzlingly clear, it was very good to bathe.

"Then, cool and happy, they wandered back in the gloaming over the soft grass road to the creek, walking hand in hand, and now the mynah birds filled the coconut trees with their clamor. And then the night, with that great sky shining with gold, that seemed to stretch more widely than the skies of Europe, and the soft airs that blew gently through the open hut, the long night again was all too short. She was sixteen and he was barely twenty. The dawn crept in among the wooded pillars of the hut and looked at those lovely children sleeping in one another's arms. The sun hid behind the great tattered leaves of the plantains so that it might not disturb them, and then, with playful malice, shot a golden ray, like the outstretched paw of a Persian cat, on their faces. They opened their sleepy eyes and they smiled to welcome another day. The weeks lengthened into months, and a year passed. They seemed to love one another as—I hesitate to say passionately, for passion has in it always a shade of sadness, a touch of bitterness or anguish, but as whole-heartedly, as simply and naturally as on that first day on which,

meeting, they had recognized that a god was in them.

"If you had asked them I have no doubt that they would have thought it impossible to suppose their love could ever cease. Do we not know that the essential element of love is a belief in its own eternity? And yet perhaps in Red there was already a very little seed, unknown to himself and unsuspected by the girl, which would in time have grown to weariness. For one day one of the natives from the cove told them that some way down the coast at the anchorage was a British whaling ship.

"Gee!" he said, "I wonder if I could make a trade of some nuts and plantains for a pound or two of tobacco."

"The pandanus cigarettes that Sally made him with untiring hands were strong and pleasant enough to smoke, but they left him unsatisfied; and he yearned on a sudden for real tobacco, hard, rank, and pungent. He had not smoked a pipe for many months. His mouth watered at the thought of it. One would have thought some premonition of harm would have made Sally seek to dissuade him, but love possessed her so completely that it never occurred to her any power on earth could take him from her. They went up into the hills together and gathered a great basket of wild oranges, green, but sweet and juicy; and they picked plantains from around the hut, and coconuts from their trees, and breadfruit and mangoes; and they carried them down to the cove. They loaded the unstable canoe with them, and Red and the native boy who had brought them the news of the ship, paddled along outside the reef.

"It was the last time she ever saw him.

"Next day the boy came back alone. He was all in tears. This is the story he told. When after their long paddle they reached the ship and Red hailed it, a white man looked over the side

and told them to come on board. They took the fruit they had brought with them and Red piled it up on the deck. The white man and he began to talk, and they seemed to come to some agreement. One of them went below and brought up tobacco. Red took some at once and lit a pipe. The boy imitated the zest with which he blew a great cloud of smoke from his mouth. Then they said something to him and he went into the cabin. Through the open door the boy, watching curiously, saw a bottle brought out and glasses. Red drank and smoked. They seemed to ask him something, for he shook his head and laughed. The men, the first man who had spoken to them, laughed too, and he filled Red's glass once more. They went on talking and drinking, and presently, growing tired of watching a sight that meant nothing to him, the boy curled himself up on the deck and slept. He was awakened by a kick; and, jumping to his feet, he saw that the ship was slowly sailing out of the lagoon. He caught sight of Red seated at the table, with his head resting heavily on his arms, fast asleep. He made a movement toward him, intending to wake him, but a rough hand seized his arm, and a man, with a scowl and words which he did not understand, pointed to the side. He shouted to Red, but in a moment he was seized and flung overboard. Helpless, he swam round to his canoe which was drifting a little way off, and pushed it onto the reef. He climbed in and, sobbing all the way, paddled back to shore.

"What had happened was obvious enough. The whaler, by desertion or sickness, was short of hands, and the captain when Red came aboard had asked him to sign on; on his refusal he had made him drunk and kidnaped him.

"Sally was beside herself with grief. For three days she screamed and cried.

The natives did what they could to comfort her, but she would not be comforted. She would not eat. And then, exhausted, she sank into a sullen apathy. She spent long days at the cove, watching the lagoon, in the vain hope that Red somehow or other would manage to escape. She sat on the white sand, hour after hour, with the tears running down her cheeks, and at night dragged herself wearily back across the creek to the little hut where she had been happy. The people with whom she had lived before Red came to the island wished her to return to them, but she would not; she was convinced that Red would come back, and she wanted him to find her where he had left her. Four months later she was delivered of a still-born child, and the old woman who had come to help her through her confinement remained with her in the hut. All joy was taken from her life. If her anguish with time became less intolerable it was replaced by a settled melancholy. You would not have thought that among these people, whose emotions, though so violent, are very transient, a woman could be found capable of so enduring a passion. She never lost the profound conviction that sooner or later Red would come back. She watched for him, and every time some one crossed this slender little bridge of coconut trees she looked. It might at last be he."

Neilson stopped talking and gave a faint sigh.

"And what happened to her in the end?" asked the skipper.

Neilson smiled bitterly.

"Oh, three years afterward she took up with another white man."

The skipper gave a fat, cynical chuckle.

"That's generally what happens to them," he said.

The Swede shot him a look of hatred. He did not know why that gross, obese

man excited in him so violent a repulsion. But his thoughts wandered and he found his mind filled with memories of the past. He went back five-and-twenty years. It was when he first came to the island, weary of Apia, with its heavy drinking, its gambling and coarse sensuality, a sick man, trying to resign himself to the loss of the career which had fired his imagination with ambitious thoughts. He set behind him resolutely all his hopes of making a great name for himself and strove to content himself with the few poor months of careful life which was all that he could count on. He was boarding with a half-caste trader who had a store a couple of miles along the coast at the edge of a native village; and one day, wandering aimlessly along the grassy paths of the coconut groves, he had come upon the hut in which Sally lived. The beauty of the spot had filled him with a rapture so great that it was almost painful, and then he had seen Sally. She was the loveliest creature he had ever seen, and the sadness in those dark, magnificent eyes of hers affected him strangely. The Kanakas were a handsome race, and beauty was not rare among them, but it was the beauty of shapely animals. It was empty. But those tragic eyes were dark with mystery, and you felt in them the bitter complexity of the groping, human soul. The trader told him the story and it moved him.

"Do you think he'll ever come back?" asked Neilson.

"No fear. Why, it'll be a couple of years before the ship is paid off, and then he'll have forgotten all about her. I bet he was pretty mad when he woke up and found he'd been shanghaied, and I shouldn't wonder but he wanted to fight somebody. But he'd got to grin and bear it, and I guess in a month he was thinking it the best thing that had ever happened to him that he got away from the island."

But Neilson could not get the story out of his head. Perhaps because he was sick and weakly, the radiant health of Red appealed to his imagination. Himself an ugly man, insignificant of appearance, he prized very highly comeliness in others. He had never been passionately in love, and certainly he had never been passionately loved. The mutual attraction of those two young things gave him a singular delight. It had the ineffable beauty of the Absolute. He went again to the little hut by the creek. He had a gift for languages and an energetic mind, accustomed to work, and he had already given much time to the study of the local tongue. Old habit was strong in him and he was gathering together material for a paper on the Samoan speech. The old crone who shared the hut with Sally invited him to come in and sit down. She gave him *kava* to drink and cigarettes to smoke. She was glad to have some one to chat with and while she talked he looked at Sally. She reminded him of the Psyche in the museum at Naples. Her features had the same clear purity of line, and though she had borne a child she had still a virginal aspect.

It was not till he had seen her two or three times that he induced her to speak. Then it was only to ask him if he had seen in Apia a man called Red. Two years had passed since his disappearance, but it was plain that she still thought of him incessantly.

It did not take Neilson long to discover that he was in love with her. It was only by an effort of will now that he prevented himself from going every day to the creek, and when he was not with Sally his thoughts were. At first, looking upon himself as a dying man, he asked only to look at her, and occasionally hear her speak, and his love gave him a wonderful happiness. He exulted in its purity. He wanted nothing from her but the opportunity to

weave around her graceful person a web of beautiful fancies. But the open air, the equable temperature, the rest, the simple fare, began to have an unexpected effect on his health. His temperature did not soar at night to such alarming heights, he coughed less and began to put on weight; six months passed without his having a hemorrhage; and on a sudden he saw the possibility that he might live. He had studied his disease carefully, and the hope dawned upon him that with great care he might arrest its course. It exhilarated him to look forward once more to the future. He made plans. It was evident that any active life was out of the question, but he could live on the islands, and the small income he had, insufficient elsewhere, would be ample to keep him. He could grow coconuts; that would give him an occupation; and he would send for his books and a piano; but his quick mind saw that in all this he was merely trying to conceal from himself the desire which obsessed him.

He wanted Sally. He loved not only her beauty, but that dim soul which he divined behind her suffering eyes. He would intoxicate her with his passion. In the end he would make her forget. And in an ecstasy of surrender he fancied himself giving her, too, the happiness which he had thought never to know again, but had now so miraculously achieved.

He asked her to live with him. She refused. He had expected that and did not let it depress him, for he was sure that sooner or later she would yield. His love was irresistible. He told the old woman of his wishes, and found somewhat to his surprise that she and the neighbors, long aware of them, were strongly urging Sally to accept his offer. After all, every native was glad to keep house for a white man, and Neilson, according to the standards of the island, was a rich one. The trader with

whom he boarded went to her and told her not to be a fool; such an opportunity would not come again, and after so long she could not still believe that Red would ever return. The girl's resistance only increased Neilson's desire, and what had been a very pure love now became an agonizing passion. He was determined that nothing should stand in his way. He gave Sally no peace. At last, worn out by his persistence and the persuasions, by turns pleading and angry, of every one around her, she consented. But the day after when, exultant, he went to see her he found that in the night she had burned down the hut in which she and Red had lived together. The old crone ran toward him full of angry abuse of Sally, but he waved her aside; it did not matter; they would build a bungalow on the place where the hut had stood. A European house would really be more convenient if he wanted to bring out a piano and a vast number of books.

And so the little wooden house was built in which he had now lived for many years, and Sally became his wife. But after the first few weeks of rapture, during which he was satisfied with what she gave him, he had known little happiness. She had yielded to him, through weariness, but she had only yielded what she set no store on. The soul which he had dimly glimpsed escaped him. He knew that she cared nothing for him. She still loved Red, and all the time she was waiting for his return. At a sign from him, Neilson knew that, notwithstanding his love, his tenderness, his sympathy, his generosity, she would leave him without a moment's hesitation. She would never give a thought to his distress. Anguish seized him and he battered at that impenetrable self of hers which sullenly resisted him. His love became bitter. He tried to melt her heart with kindness, but it remained as hard as before;

he feigned indifference, but she did not notice it. Sometimes he lost his temper and abused her, and then she wept silently. Sometimes he thought she was nothing but a fraud, and that soul simply an invention of his own, and that he could not get into the sanctuary of her heart because there was no sanctuary there. His love became a prison from which he longed to escape, but he had not the strength merely to open the door—that was all it needed—and walk out into the open air. It was torture and at last he became numb and hopeless. In the end the fire burned itself out and, when he saw her eyes rest for an instant on the slender bridge, it was no longer rage that filled his heart but impatience. For many years now they had lived together, bound by the ties of habit and convenience, and it was with a smile that he looked back on his old passion. She was an old woman, for the women on the islands age quickly, and, if he had no love for her any more, he had tolerance. She left him alone. He was contented with his piano and his books.

His thoughts led him to a desire for words.

"When I look back now and reflect on that brief passionate love of Red and Sally, I think that perhaps they should thank the ruthless fate that separated them when their love seemed still to be at its height. They suffered, but they suffered in beauty. They were spared the real tragedy of love."

"I don't know exactly as I get you," said the skipper.

"The tragedy of love is not death or separation. How long do you think it would have been before one or other of them ceased to care? Oh, it is dreadfully bitter to look at a woman whom you have loved with all your heart and soul, so that you felt you could not bear to let her out of your sight, and realize that you would not mind if you

never saw her again. The tragedy of love is indifference."

But while he was speaking a very extraordinary thing happened. Though he had been addressing the skipper he had not been talking to him, he had been putting his thoughts into words for himself, and with his eyes fixed on the man in front of him he had not seen him. But now an image presented itself to them; an image not of the man he saw, but of another man. It was as though he were looking into one of those distorting mirrors that make you extraordinarily squat or outrageously elongate, but here exactly the opposite took place, and in the obese, ugly old man he caught the shadowy glimpse of a stripling. He gave him now a quick, searching scrutiny. Why had a haphazard stroll brought him just to this place? A sudden tremor of his heart made him slightly breathless. An absurd suspicion seized him. What had occurred to him was impossible, and yet it might be a fact.

"What is your name?" he asked abruptly.

The skipper's face puckered and he gave a cunning chuckle. He looked then malicious and horribly vulgar.

"It's such a damned long time since I heard it that I almost forget it myself. But for thirty years now in the islands they've always called me Red."

His huge form shook as he gave a low, almost silent laugh. It was obscene. Neilson shuddered. Red was hugely amused, and from his bloodshot eyes tears ran down his cheeks.

Neilson gave a gasp, for at that moment a woman came in. She was a native, a woman of somewhat commanding presence, stout without being corpulent, dark, for the natives grow darker with age, with very gray hair. She wore a black Mother Hubbard. The moment had come.

She made an observation to Neilson about some household matter and he

answered. He wondered if his voice sounded as unnatural to her as it did to himself. She gave the man who was sitting in the chair by the window an indifferent glance, and went out of the room. The moment had come and gone.

Neilson for a moment could not speak. He was strangely shaken. Then he said:

"I'd be very glad if you'd stay and have a bit of dinner with me. Pot luck."

"I don't think I will," said Red. "I must go after this fellow Gray. I'll give him his stuff and then I'll get away. I want to be back in Apia tomorrow."

"I'll send a boy along with you to show you the way."

"That'll be fine."

Red heaved himself out of his chair, while the Swede called one of the boys who worked on the plantation. He told him where the skipper wanted to go, and the boy stepped along the bridge. Red prepared to follow him.

"Don't fall in," said Neilson.

"Not on your life."

Neilson watched him make his way across and when he had disappeared among the coconuts he looked still. Then he sank heavily in his chair. Was that the man who had prevented him from being happy? Was that the man whom Sally had loved all these years and for whom she had waited so desperately? It was grotesque. A sudden fury seized him so that he had an instinct to spring up and smash everything around him. He had been

cheated. They had seen each other at last and had not known it. He began to laugh, mirthlessly, and his laughter grew till it became hysterical. The gods had played him a cruel trick. And he was old now.

At last Sally came in to tell him dinner was ready. He sat down in front of her and tried to eat. He wondered what she would say if he told her now that the fat old man sitting in the chair was the lover whom she remembered still with the passionate abandonment of her youth. Years ago, when he hated her because she made him so unhappy, he would have been glad to tell her. He wanted to hurt her then as she hurt him, because his hatred was only love. But now he did not care. He shrugged his shoulders listlessly.

"What did that man want?" she asked presently.

He did not answer at once. She was old too, a fat, old native woman. He wondered why he had ever loved her so madly. He had laid at her feet all the treasures of his soul, and she had cared nothing for them. Waste, what waste! And now, when he looked at her, he felt only contempt. His patience was at last exhausted. He answered her question.

"He's the captain of a schooner. He's come from Apia."

"Yes."

"He brought me news from home. My eldest brother is very ill and I must go back."

"Will you be gone long?"

He shrugged his shoulders.



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by
Katherine Mansfield
Author of "Pictures"



FROM STUDIES BY A. LAMBERTSON

Feuille D'Album

HE really was an impossible person. Too shy altogether. With absolutely nothing to say for himself. And such a weight. Once he was in your studio he never knew when to go, but would sit on and on until you nearly screamed, and burned to throw something enormous after him when he did finally blush his way out—something like the tortoise stove. The strange thing was that at first sight he looked most interesting. Everybody agreed about that. You would drift into the café one evening and there you would see, sitting in a corner, with a glass of coffee in front of him, a thin, dark boy, wearing a blue jersey with a little gray-flannel jacket buttoned over it. And somehow that blue jersey and the gray jacket with the sleeves that were too short gave him the air of a boy that has made up his mind to run away to sea. Who has run away, in fact, and will get up in a moment and sling a knotted handkerchief containing his nightshirt and his mother's picture on the end of a stick, and walk out into the night and be drowned—stumble over the wharf edge on his way

to the ship, even. He had black, close-cropped hair, gray eyes with long lashes, white cheeks and a mouth pouting as though he were determined not to cry. How could one resist him? Oh, one's heart was wrung at sight. And, as if that were not enough, there was his trick of blushing. Whenever the waiter came near him he turned crimson—he might have been just out of prison and the waiter in the know.

"Who is he, my dear? Do you know?"

"Yes. His name is Ian French. Painter. Awfully clever, they say. Some one started by giving him a mother's tender care. She asked him how often he heard from home, whether he had enough blankets on his bed, how much milk he drank a day. But when she went round to his studio to give an eye to his socks, she rang and rang, and though she could have sworn she heard some one breathing inside, the door was not answered. Hopeless!"

Some one else decided that he ought to fall in love. She summoned him to her side, called him "boy," leaned over him so that he might smell the en-

chanting perfume of her hair, took his arm, told him how marvelous life could be if one only had the courage, and went round to his studio one evening and rang and rang. Hopeless.

"What the poor boy really wants is thoroughly rousing," said a third. So off they went to cafés and cabarets, little dances, places where you drank something that tasted like tinned apricot juice, but cost twenty-seven shillings a bottle and was called champagne, other places, too thrilling for words, where you sat in the most awful gloom, and where some one had always been shot the night before. But he did not turn a hair. Only once he got very drunk, but instead of blossoming forth, there he sat, stony, with two spots of red on his cheeks, like, my dear, yes, the dead image of that ragtime thing they were playing—like a "Broken Doll." But when she took him back to his studio he had quite recovered, and said "good night" to her in the street below, as though they had walked home from church together. Hopeless.

After heaven knows how many more attempts—for the spirit of kindness dies very hard in women—they gave him up. Of course, they were still perfectly charming, and asked him to their shows, and spoke to him in the café, but that was all. When one is an artist one has no time simply for people who won't respond. Has one?

"And besides I really think there must be something rather fishy somewhere, don't you? It can't all be as innocent as it looks! Why come to Paris if you want to be a daisy in the field? No, I'm not suspicious. But —"

He lived at the top of a tall, mournful building overlooking the river. One of those buildings that look so romantic on rainy nights and moonlight nights, when the shutters are shut, and the heavy door, and the sign advertising

"a little apartment to let immediately" gleams forlorn beyond words. One of those buildings that smell so unromantic all the year round, and where the concierge lives in a glass cage on the ground floor, wrapped up in a filthy shawl, stirring something in a saucepan and lading out tit-bits to the swollen old dog lolling on a bead cushion. Perched up in the air the studio had a wonderful view. The two big windows faced the water; he could see the boats and the barges swinging up and down, and the fringe of an island planted with trees, like a round bouquet. The side window looked across to another house, shabbier still and smaller, and down below there was a flower market. You could see the tops of huge umbrellas, with frills of bright flowers escaping from them, booths covered with striped awning where they sold plants in boxes and clumps of wet gleaming palms in terracotta jars. Among the flowers the old women scuttled from side to side, like crabs. Really there was no need for him to go out. If he sat at the window until his white beard fell over the sill he still would have found something to draw.

How surprised those tender women would have been if they had managed to force the door. For he kept his studio as neat as a pin. Everything was arranged to form a pattern, a little "still life" as it were—the saucepans with their lids on the wall behind the gas stove, the bowl of eggs, milk jug and teapot on the shelf, the books and the lamp with the crinkly paper shade on the table. An Indian curtain that had a fringe of red leopards marching round it covered his bed by day, and on the wall beside the bed on a level with your eyes when you were lying down there was a small, neatly printed notice: "Get up at once."

Every day was much the same. While the light was good he slaved at

his painting, then cooked his meals and tidied up the place. And in the evenings he went off to the café, or sat at home reading or making out the most complicated list of expenses headed: "What I ought to be able to do it on," and ending with a sworn statement: "I swear not to exceed this amount for next month." Signed, "Ian French."

Nothing very fishy about this; but those far-seeing women were quite right. It wasn't all.

One evening he was sitting at the side window eating some prunes and throwing the stones onto the tops of the huge umbrellas in the deserted flower market. It had been raining—the first real spring rain of the year had fallen—a bright spangle hung on everything, and the air smelled of buds and moist earth. Many voices sounding languid and content rang out in the dusky air, and the people who had come to close their windows and fasten the shutters, leaned out instead. Down below in the market the trees were peppered with new green. What kind of trees were they, he wondered. And now came the lamplighter. He stared at the house across the way, the small, shabby house, and suddenly, as if in answer to his gaze, two wings of windows opened and a girl came out onto the tiny balcony carrying a pot of daffodils. She was a strangely thin girl in a dark pinafore, with a pink handkerchief tied over her hair. Her sleeves were rolled up almost to her shoulders and her slender arms shone against the dark stuff.

"Yes, it is quite warm enough. It will do them good," she said, putting down the pot and turning to some one in the room inside. As she turned she put her hands up to the handkerchief and tucked away some wisps of hair. She looked down at the deserted market and up at the sky, but where he sat there might have been a hollow in the air. She simply did not see the

house opposite. And then she disappeared.

His heart fell out of the side window of his studio, and down to the balcony of the house opposite—buried itself in the pot of daffodils under the half-opened buds and spears of green. That room with the balcony was the sitting room, and the one next door to it was the kitchen. He heard the clatter of the dishes as she washed up after supper, and then she came to the window, knocked a little mop against the ledge, and hung it on a nail to dry. She never sang or unbraided her hair, or held out her arms to the moon as young girls are supposed to do. And she always wore the same dark pinafore and the pink handkerchief over her hair. Whom did she live with? Nobody else came to those two windows, and yet she was always talking to some one in the room. Her mother, he decided, was an invalid. They took in sewing. The father was dead. He had been a journalist—very pale, with long mustaches, and a piece of black hair falling over his forehead.

By working all day they just made enough money to live on, but they never went out and they had no friends. Now when he sat down at his table he had to make an entirely new set of sworn statements: Not to go to the side window before a certain hour: signed Ian French. Not to think about her until he had put away his painting things for the day: signed, Ian French.

It was quite simple. She was the only person he wanted to know, because she was, he decided, the only other person alive who was just his age. He couldn't stand giggling girls, and he had no use for grown-up women. She was his age, she was—well, just like him. He sat in his dusky studio, tired, with one arm hanging over the back of his chair, staring in at her window and seeing himself in there with her. She had a violent temper; they quarreled

terribly at times, he and she. She had a way of stamping her foot and twisting her hands in her pinafore—furious. And she very rarely laughed. Only when she told him about an absurd little kitten she once had who used to roar and pretend to be a lion when it was given meat to eat. Things like that made her laugh. But as a rule they sat together very quietly; he, just as he was sitting now, and she with her hands folded in her lap and her feet tucked under, talking in low tones, or silent and tired after the day's work. Of course, she never asked him about his pictures, and of course he made the most wonderful drawings of her which she hated, because he made her so thin and so dark. But how could he get to know her? This might go on for years.

Then he discovered that once a week, in the evenings, she went out shopping. On two successive Thursdays she came to the window wearing an old-fashioned cape over the pinafore, and carrying a basket. From where he sat he could not see the door of her house, but on the next Thursday evening at the same time he snatched up his cap and ran down the stairs. There was a lovely pink light over everything. He saw it glowing in the river, and the people walking toward him had pink faces and pink hands.

He leaned against the side of his house waiting for her and he had no idea of what he was going to do or say. "Here she comes," said a voice in his head. She walked very quickly, with small, light steps; with one hand she carried the basket, with the other she kept the cape together. What could he do? He could only follow. First she

went into the grocer's and spent a long time in there, and then she went into the butcher's, where she had to wait her turn. Then she was an age at the draper's, matching something, and then she went to the fruit shop and bought a lemon. As he watched her he knew more surely than ever he must get to know her now. Her composure, her seriousness and her loneliness, the very way she walked as though she was eager to be done with this world of grown-ups, all was so natural to him and so inevitable.

"Yes, she is always like that," he thought proudly. "We have nothing to do with these people."

But now she was on her way home and he was as far off as ever. She suddenly turned into the dairy and he saw her through the window buying an egg. She picked it out of the basket with such care—a brown one, a beautifully shaped one, the one he would have chosen. And when she came out of the dairy he went in after her. In a moment he was out again, and following her past his house across the flower market, dodging among the huge umbrellas and treading on the fallen flowers and the round marks where the pots had stood. Through her door he crept, and up the stairs after, taking care to tread in-time with her so that she should not notice. Finally, she stopped on the landing, and took a key out of her purse. As she put it into the door he ran up and faced her.

Blushing more crimson than ever, but looking at her severely, he said, almost angrily:

"Excuse me, mademoiselle, you dropped this."

And he handed her an egg.



by
Michael Sadleir

Author of:

"A
Victorian
Tale"



A Mother's Comedy

WHEN Doctor Pardoe died three years were yet to run of the twenty-six to which, at his first renting of the old house on the High Street, he had committed himself and his family. It had been something of a venture, that twenty-six years' lease, involving issues graver and less ponderable even than those of physical migration from the spruce villadom of the Malling Park Estate to the reserved dignity of the Old Town. "Leybourne," vividly prominent at the corner of Mallworth Avenue and Station Road, represented to his timid and somewhat volatile ambition an adequate if moderate certainty. "Doctor's Castle," on the other hand—for such, oddly enough, was the local nickname of the old red house—meant a definite increase in yearly expenditure and a dubious increase in practice.

"Old Humphreys is known to them," he had objected, when his wife urged him to enterprise. "He may be past

his work and out of date, but so are they, also—for the most part. I shall lose my patients at this end to that quack, Stylott, and find none to replace them at the other."

"Darling," she had replied, in her caressing drawl, "you know I never advise you except for your happiness. You are so modest that you give yourself too little credit. Have I not been *begged* to persuade you to the old town? Every one is *longing* for a real doctor. And then—of course, you think I am silly—but the phrase 'Doctor's Castle!' So romantically suitable! Good will in itself."

He had smiled, indulgent to her graceful affection.

"It was a different kind of doctor!" he had ventured.

"Psh! As if *that* mattered! It is your chance. Alfred, I mean it. *Do* think of yourself just this once!"

He had yielded at the last, his precautionary scruples soothed by the

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emollience of his wife's forethought. "The stabling!" she would murmur. "All the trouble of hiring will be spared you, and you know how Carter and his meanness worries you! It will be much cheaper in the end." Or again: "Poor *dear*, you look so *tired*! Now, when you have that long, quiet room on the garden you can work out all your wonderful discoveries and never be disturbed an instant." Or again: "Have those horrid Mertons not paid yet! And they roll in money. At least, in the old town we shall deal with gentlefolk and you will be saved *that* kind of anxiety."

So the plunge was taken, and Alfred Pardoe struck out toward the patronage of the Retsworth aristocracy, while his wife, clinging with elegance about his neck and encouraging him with sweet flattery, counted the yards that sundered her from the social intimacies she craved.

Perseverance, ceaseless labor, and sound knowledge on the doctor's part, aided by the lucky demise of his ancient rival, made of the new life a semblance of success. In ten years he was medical adviser to all the best people, and, more satisfactorily to his wife, admitted on terms of cordiality to their dinner tables and their amusements. The dogcart with which he started was replaced by a brougham. This, because Mrs. Pardoe wished it, was later supplemented by a Victoria. Came the age of petrol, and the horses were sold, the stables converted, and a motor purchased for professional convenience. The case of the brougham was reenacted. "It wouldn't be *much* out of your way, darling, to drop me at Mrs. Willoughby's?" Or again: "Those tiresome stores have not sent the things. As you come back, *could* you get these few oddments at—and—and—" Or again: "The girls' dancing class is at three and I *don't* like them walking out in this slush. I wonder—" When,

now and again, he would flash out into the weak temper of the wife-ridden man, his too-violent protests were received with an abasement that disarmed him. "Oh, Alfred, I *am* sorry! You must be worn out. Of course it doesn't matter." And for two days would endure ostentatious labor in his intimate service, orgies of shirt mending, tender inquiries as to health, feverish interest in the details of his work. Partly won over, partly nerve-racked by the martyred activity of a usually indolent woman, he would himself volunteer his car, his odd moments, even his hard-earned balance, and count the sacrifice well made, if his wife consented to become her feckless self once more. The purchase of a second car, while it wiped out the savings of five years, put a stop at least to the perpetual intrusion of private on professional affairs. And once again, he decided with a mental shrug that worry in the present was well allayed, even at the price of comfort in the future.

All the time there was growing up about him a family of children. Two had been born under the art-tiling of "Leybourne." Three more came to being in the first five years at "Doctor's Castle." The mother spoke of them as yet further proof of her self-sacrifice and devotion to her husband. "He *adores* children," she would say to some female intimate, "and then of course for a doctor's wife it is different, isn't it? He is so clever and it does one's heart good to see his delight in them. I have been very fortunate. Yes—the easiest time, with every one. But, of course, I am an old woman now—with my little brood!" And she would receive, with deprecating protest, compliments to her willowy and youthful figure and to the spiritual transparency of her skin. Truth to tell, she let the gift of birth do service not only for its splendid self, but also for those less spectacular, more wearisome duties that

usually devolve on the mother of small children. The little Pardoes were left to nurses and servants and to the indulgence of their father's few hours of leisure. Of their mother they saw little enough, save after drawing-room tea, when, in clean frocks, they were set to posture before visitors to the greater glory of maternal vanity, or on those more numerous occasions when their needs or desires, serving to justify some additional luxury, pandered to their mother's love of spending. Such an upbringing threw onto temperament the whole responsibility of forming character. The child that was naturally orderly came to orderly maturity; the rowdy grew to rowdiness; the equable and the bad-tempered respectively to good-natured unselfishness and to cross-grained complaining.

The years passed; the doctor toiled ever more ceaselessly; until, when his eldest child was twenty-six and his youngest eighteen, he took influenza from a patient, developed bronchial pneumonia and in a week was dead. He was not an old man; his health had always been good. Mrs. Pardoe felt the calamity as another woman would have felt sudden brutality. After all she had done for him, to die like that, leaving her and her children forlorn and unprotected! Matters became doubly serious with investigation of his affairs. Of late years, weary of struggling to keep expenditure within the limits of good economics, he had let things slide. The bank manager was an old friend and had delayed, from kindness and from personal embarrassment, the needed warning. His good intention was, by his client's unexpected death, transformed into cruelty; to the widow, confident in a safe if moderate inheritance, he could reveal only debt.

Mrs. Pardoe supported the blow in her own way. To the bank manager she said very little. Only this in fact: "I am sure my husband spent on him-

self what he considered necessary to his work; to his wife and children he was just, rather than generous. But I cannot complain. It was my fault for being content with ignorance of his affairs." To her brother she wrote rather differently: "You have always girded at Alfred, and I have always stood up for him as a wife should. When you learn how he has left me, you will affect no surprise. 'She married beneath her,' you will say, 'and this thriftlessness is what one would expect from ill-breeding.' You will call it selfish in him not to have considered the risks of his life, exposed as he was to infection of every kind. You will think me ill-used in return for my devotion and care of his comfort, thus to be widowed and penniless. Alas, I cannot prevent your thoughts nor, if I could, would their prevention benefit me. I am too stunned, as yet, to plan for the future, but at least I have my children. *They* will see that I do not want—" And more in the same strain. Finally, to those children themselves, assembled in family council, she spoke as follows:

"—You see, therefore, my darlings, that we must help one another. We shall come through—never fear. My family have always come through in the past, and I am sure you will not now be unworthy of your forbears. Your poor father was not a business man. He had great talents, but they were not of the kind to make money or to keep it. I blame myself for leaving in his hands work that he was too busy and not by temperament fitted to perform. However, it is useless to cry over spilt milk. Let us count our advantages rather than our burdens. For myself, I want little. This house and garden, my friends, a crust to eat—that is all I ask. *You* have your lives before you. Fortunately your education is complete. The time has come to turn to good account what I and your father have done

to fit you for the world. Dear Alfred has already made a start—"

Alfred, the eldest, fidgeted with his collar. For the last two years, after the completion of his technical training, he had helped his father in and about Retsworth. A clever boy would so far have profited from such skillful and loving tutelage as, in a crisis of this kind, to assume instantly the headship of the family and dispose, as it deserved, of his mother's disingenuous rhetoric. But Alfred was not clever. He distrusted his mother, but he distrusted himself still more. Faced with the task of solitary practice he fumbled and was afraid. Desperately striving to conceal his nervous diffidence—for he felt his seniority a little heavily and longed to resent his mother's assumption of authority—he achieved only an awkward sulkiness. Now, as often before, he felt baffled in his desire for self-assertion by the palpable dishonesty of Mrs. Pardoe's method of attack. Her reference to education struck him as particularly unscrupulous. Were he for himself to claim a due of tutelage, he would in some sort abandon his customary assumption of maturity. On the other hand, he knew that money, were it forthcoming, might help his own start in independent doctoring to a degree incalculable, and that to press the needs of his brothers on the straitened resources of the family would be tantamount to resigning any pretension of his own. So he fidgeted with his collar and sought lumberingly for a line of argument.

"—And for Alfred's sake," continued Mrs. Pardoe, "I am anxious to live on in this house for the remainder of the lease. Alfred will profit—do not fiddle at your collar, Alfred dear; you only tear the stud-hole; Dorothea tells me that several were badly frayed when they came home from the wash last week—Alfred, I was saying, will profit from the fact that folks regard this as

the doctor's house. They will give him a trial if only for his father's sake—a trial," she added graciously, "that I am sure he will amply justify." There was a pause, while Mrs. Pardoe relished in silence her children's subjugation. Then she proceeded: "In the second place, this has been my home—and yours—for many years, and your dear father would wish me to stay here among my friends. There is a third reason, which Molly will appreciate without my explaining it. I am glad to spare her the discomfort of attempting to do so."

Again the speaker paused, glancing from one to another of her hearers with a somber glitter in her large, indolent eyes that might betoken either expectancy or spitefulness. Molly, twenty-two and emphatically feminine, tossed her fair curls and pouted at the sunset. A flaming sky lit her cheeks fiercely, and she courted its reflected glow, conscious that her high color was not all of heaven but hopeful, by laying the blame for it on the sinking sun, to acquit her own embarrassment.

Molly was the social success of the family. Her brothers were undistinguished in looks and manners, her only sister seemed ten rather than two years her senior. Aware of her own superior graces, she had grown into calm acceptance of her greater share of life's pleasant gayeties. She hunted and golfed and danced where her brothers dared not, and her sister might not follow. Her father's patients included many of the neighboring county families, but to their wide and comfortable houses the doctor's children were, with one exception, only formally welcome. "Molly is such a dear," they would say. "A real sport, that younger Pardoe girl," they would say. And so she was invited here and there, but the others not, a state of affairs productive of much possible friction. Her popularity had, however, begun too early, had been too clearly evident in comparison with

the awkward civility shown to her brothers and to her sister, to disturb the family harmony in serious degree. Her home fellows, no less than her acquaintances, accepted Molly as the best-looking and the easiest mannered of the younger generation at Doctor's Castle. Without protest they left to her preëminence in the social arts, comforting themselves with their very modest prowess in other spheres of activity. Now and again was murmuring—if Molly's home-coming at 3 A. M. from the Hunt Ball caused noisy farewells under the bed-room windows of the less favored; if hospitable aunts in London invited Molly, and again Molly only, for a week of dissipation; if, in the matter of new clothes and thanks to the arduous smartness of her existence, Molly had twice or thrice the number that were fairly hers. But such grumbling was half-hearted at worst, and, in the face of Mrs. Pardoe's strong support of the fortunate culprit, did not seriously affect the contentment of the household. Any bitterness was further sweetened by the genial temper of Molly herself. She was a placid and affectionate little person, whose pink cheeks, dimples and softly vigorous movements were a true expression of temperament. She could slough off one environment when entering another, as easily as she could slip from her frilled dressing gown into a warm bath. Never once, in the adequate but controlled comfort of home, did memories of lavish entertainment at the houses of her wealthy friends come to jar her equable good humor. Dorothea, whom the pleasures of religion compensated less fully than she would readily have admitted for physical insignificance, sought now and again to pique her sister into derogation of the family way of life. "What a mess Hugh makes of the bathroom!" she said one day. "His old loofah always on the soap tray, his shaving things scattered about everywhere. Boys are

disgusting! I wish we had two or three bathrooms like the Molyneux."

"Where would you put them?" asked Molly placidly.

Dorothea sniffed. It is irritating to be challenged on a practical issue, when presenting a theoretical grievance.

"I suppose I must go and see about the vegetables," she went on. "Graves might really bring them up to the house every day. Mrs. Wyndham told me she never goes into the kitchen-garden at all, except to see how the peaches are getting on. Nothing works automatically here!"

"Poor Thea! I'll go, if you are busy."

"Of course not! I haven't got a lot of invitations to answer or finery to stitch at! You won't have those night-gowns finished for Tuesday if you aren't careful, and you must do us justice in front of Aunt Louisa's maids."

And she bustled gloomily away.

The limpid pools of Molly's mind remained unruffled by this and similar conversations. She was often sorry for Thea, who hated domestic duties and, after early communion, was cross for the rest of the day. Probably, other things being equal, she would prefer her own bathroom—as at the Molyneux—to a hurried few minutes among her brother's shaving tackle; probably also the Wyndham method of fruit and vegetable catering would be her method could she choose between it and that in force at Doctor's Castle. But comparisons of the kind were foreign to her mentality. She was always subject to the dominant influence of the moment. This was home, with the ways and the food and the worn carpets proper to its familiar spaces; Tarr Court and Ladelea Manor were things other, with ways proper—no doubt—to themselves. And there she left it.

Lately, indeed, thoughts of change, but of another kind, had begun secretly to trespass on her contentment. For

their secrecy she treasured them deliberately blind to the true meaning of their recurrence and of her involuntary welcome to them. Two years of social frivolity had taught her the language of flirtation, but not even the alphabet of love. Men, attracted by her cuddlesome prettiness, by the appeal of her ready laughter, by her energy on the links, the tennis court or the river, had flocked about her since first she emerged from flapperdom. They carried her clubs and her wraps, bought her chocolates and flowers, slung shady hammocks for her Sunday afternoons, competed for vacant spaces on her dance cards. The uncritical habit that made her at once a pleasant daughter and sister and a delightful guest, followed her into the lists of gallantry. To each man of the dozen who were assiduous in her service she was confiding and friendly, deaf to their hints of rivalry, as happily satisfied with every circumstance of the moment, as she had been with those of yesterday, as she would be with those of to-morrow.

At home she was chaffed freely about her admirers. "Jack Hinton came past this morning," Hugh would say gravely. "Poor fellow! So pale he looked. He had a flower in his buttonhole. A camelia. Molly wore camelias last night at the ball. I waved a handkerchief from the landing window. That cheered him up."

Or on another occasion:

"Peter was nearly drowned yesterday. He flung himself into the river, and two people in a punt were so engrossed in their own affairs that they never even shifted the sunshade to see who was in need of help."

Molly giggled.

"Don't be silly, Hugh. I wasn't on the river yesterday!"

"Never said you were, duckie!" retorted her brother gleefully. "The cap seems to fit all the same."

"Well, what became of Peter? Did he drown?"

Hugh shook his head.

"No. But he might have done, if he hadn't been able to swim. He was bathing, you see."

Mrs. Pardoe took no part in tormenting her daughter, but she kept a very close eye on the progress of Molly's friendships. Doctor Pardoe, in the year before his death, would protest that she overdid her maternal watchfulness.

"Leave the girl alone, my dear!" he would say. "There's no harm in her, and when something real comes along, you won't be able to control matters any the better for past interference."

Mrs. Pardoe refused to argue the point. Her husband mistook her motives, but she knew that they were good and meant to act upon them.

"Molly is very young," she would reply, "and it is our duty to guard her innocence. Besides, my children are my hobby. They are my world. You have your own great, clever interests; I am a mother first and last and all the time. Still, as you wish it, I will be doubly careful. The darling child shall notice nothing."

It was six months before her father's last illness that Molly met Ernest Gower. He came to Tarr Court for a week after Goodwood, and Molly was a guest in the house. Almost at once, with a possessive severity strangely different from the affectionate politeness of her other cavaliers, he sought her company. He was over six feet in height, full complexioned and bull-necked. The first afternoon, on the tennis courts, she noticed his great forearms and wrists, downy with soft dark hair. They played on opposite sides and one of his strong, low drives hit her on the knee, so that she stumbled and lay on the court. He was over the net in a moment and kneeling beside her.

"Have I hurt you?" he inquired.

"Please forgive me! I am a careless brute."

She looked up at his face, and the scowl of anxiety seemed to lend piercing force to his bright gray eyes. For an instant her self-command wavered, but she pulled herself together and gave him one of her ready smiles.

"I'm perfectly all right, thank you. It took me by surprise." She prepared to scramble to her feet. Without a word he put his huge hands under her arms and picked her up like a child. Till she fell asleep that night she could feel the grip of his fingers on her shoulder-blades.

By the end of the week it was clear to the Molyneux house-party that Ernest Gower was interested in Molly Pardoe.

"He's fearfully rich, darling," Ada Molyneux said suddenly, as she sat in Molly's bedroom for their nightly gossip.

"Who is?" asked the guest innocently.

"*Who is!*" mimicked Ada. "Hark at her! Why, your great bear Gower, you silly! Fearfully rich; and never loved anything but horses before."

"What nonsense you talk, Ada. Let him go back to his old horses for all I care!"

"Hoity-toity! We have betrayed ourselves a little. Darling Molly, don't be cross with me! I should like you to marry some one really fine; not one of the nambies round here. And Gower really is a man, isn't he?"

Molly laughed.

"I can only presume so," she said. "He certainly looks like one. Anyway, I don't suppose I shall see him again, so that's that."

"No, it isn't Miss Clever! Far from it! He has bought Warrenders and will be living five miles away in three months' time."

"Warrenders? The racing stable?"

Ada nodded.

"And the big house. He went and

signed it all up yesterday. Quick work at the end. I wonder why?"

She hummed an aggravating tune.

Molly set her lips demurely.

"I hope he'll like his new house," she said at last. "It's a dreary great barrack of a place to look at."

"It only wants a mistress to put it in order," replied the other. "Good night, dear."

Mrs. Pardoe heard all about Ernest Gower and the new house the day that Molly got home. From whom she derived the information no one knew, and she said no word on the matter to her daughter, but in her own efficient way she made investigations as to the new-comer's parentage and resources. These completed, she settled down to watch developments.

Her husband's illness and death, while it naturally upset the lives of all his children, only served to deepen the interest of the widow in the prospects of her second daughter. She told herself that on Molly alone now depended the family salvation. Molly at least was her mother's child. The others, she told herself, took after their father's family. They were ordinary; they were undistinguished; all except Molly. But even Molly, once she lost her looks, would go the way of a million unnoticed women. Mrs. Pardoe had despaired of Dorothea since, pimply and fifteen, she had forced an embarrassed but fanatical young curate to hear confession. Gradually the mother came to realize that the boys also were hopeless. Alfred, callow and gauche as a medical student, had returned to Retsworth a drab and silent young man, lacking in his mother's opinion, all the graces of a successful practitioner. He was industrious and presumably knowledgeable enough, but for a touch of magnetism Mrs. Pardoe would gladly have seen her son shorn of half his learning.

For the shortcomings of Hugh, her

second son and her fourth child, she laid blame everywhere but—as she should have done—upon herself. At the age of eighteen he had gone as pupil to the estate offices of the Duke of Windlesham, whose agent was an old friend of Doctor Pardoe. He had always been fond of the open air, and the doctor was grateful for so good an opening to a knowledge of land-agency, an occupation seemingly well suited to Hugh's natural tastes. He was a noisy, empty-headed, good-natured youth, a little addicted to horseplay, but without guile and eminently teachable. Windlesham Castle being but fifteen miles from Retsworth, he bicycled home for Sundays, returning to his work by the same means on Monday morning. The week-ends passed by, and Mrs. Pardoe, forever too eagerly on the watch in the interests of deportment, taught herself to believe that Hugh was deteriorating. She told her husband that the boy was in bad company and should be spoken to. Doctor Pardoe, harassed by money cares and stupid with overwork, was disinclined to judicial tolerance. He accepted her story and rated Hugh for sins of which he was innocent. Mrs. Pardoe met him on the mat, as he emerged, partly astonished, partly hurt, from his father's study, and treated him—to use a family phrase—to one of her "symphonies in the key of Grieve." This was the last straw. He lunged out into clumsy argument. His mother tightened her lips and watched him coldly. He floundered to silence and stood sulkily perplexed.

"This pains me more than you, Hugh," she said at last. "I can only hope that God will set your feet into new and better paths."

That, after such treatment, he should seek distraction just where he had been falsely accused of finding it, was not surprising. Both at Windlesham and at Retsworth were to be found flash ne'er-do-weels of the type indigenous in

towns adjoining well-known race-courses. Hugh went to no extremes. Indeed, for all but the veriest fraction of his time, he remained the heedless, explosive lout he had always been. It was nevertheless, due to the missing fraction that he could not, now that he was twenty, total up to the standard required by Molly's fashionable friends. But for those odd hours in the wrong company, his high spirits and love of games would have rendered him grateful if unexact company to the young bloods of the county. But there had crept into his high spirits a note of commonness; into his love of games a touch, at once sharp and sour, of professional sport. The county shivered and left him alone. Mrs. Pardoe, touched in a tender spot, accepted the defeat, but her heart became somber toward her recreant son.

If neither from Alfred nor from Hugh could be expected worldly achievement, the prospects of Kenaeth, though for no discreditable reason, were equally mediocre. Eighteen only at his father's death, he had been vowed to the navy, since as a small boy he first went to Osborne. The navy, even to cadets as fond of their life and as rich in friends as was young Kenneth Pardoe, holds out no hope of early affluence nor indeed—unless from the happy hazard of a war—of great rapidity on the road to glory.

Alfred a drudge; Dorothea, a fiddle-faced church-haunter; Hugh, a bar-lounger; Kenneth, a penniless naval cadet—so, in summary, ran the embittered thoughts of an ambitious mother when, during the dark hours after her husband's death, she plotted how best to master the future. Molly remained; Molly with her pretty face and graceful ways, her smart friends and her modest, adaptable nature; Molly—to be near whom Ernest Gower had taken Warrenders and come to live at Retsworth. With a grim relief, she deter-

mined that Molly should marry Gower and that on his shoulders should be laid the task of making soft his mother-in-law's declining years.

Wherefore it came about that, as her chief reason for staying on at any price in the old house in Retsworth High Street, the mother set before her children one of their own love affairs. The action was carefully calculated. Among their intimates the possible pairing of Ernest Gower and Molly Pardoe had been half-humorously, half-seriously canvassed; but beyond this nothing was known, because in fact, nothing had occurred. The mother had begun to wonder whether Molly were any more closely touched by this latest admirer than by those who had preceded him. Suppose she were incapable of deep feeling? Suppose—worse still—she had no sense of what was practical? Suppose she let her youth and her beauty dribble away in fatuous river or ball-room gallantries? The idea was too terrible to be borne. References direct and oblique made in private to Molly by her mother could elicit neither blush nor frown. She smiled placidly and even joked over Gower and his rumored devotion. "How you fuss, mumsy darling! Surely the poor man can have a racing stable if he likes?" "But he is always making meetings with you, is he not?" Molly shook her head, gazing at her mother with innocent round eyes. "How should I know? I see him sometimes, but whether he fixed it— Really, to hear you, I might be Circe or a Siren or something!"

At last, and determined to put her belief to what might prove a final test, Mrs. Pardoe had decided on the mention in full family conclave of Molly's supposed lover. What happened has been told. Dorothea saw the blush behind the reflected sunset; so did Mrs. Pardoe. That was enough. The for-

mer told an ill-favored but devout friend who, in the intervals of prayer, told other friends. Mrs. Pardoe whispered over the Vicarage tea table the next afternoon that she "supposed they must lose their dear Molly once she was out of mourning for her poor father." And so in three days Retsworth—or as much of it as counted—knew, in varying degree of certainty, that Molly Pardoe was engaged to Ernest Gower.

On the fourth day Molly met some girls she knew outside the post office.

"You sly thing!" cried one of them. "Fancy never telling a soul. Do ask me to be a bridesmaid! I think he's awfully handsome."

"So do I!" gurgled another. "I'm dead with jealousy of you, you lucky girl."

Molly allowed herself for one short moment to wonder what they meant. Then—as on a hundred earlier occasions—her customary readiness to accept the immediate present came to her rescue. Evidently she was engaged to be married. These girls had virtually said so. It could only be to Ernest Gower. She could not remember his proposing to her nor her reply, but having no illusions as to her memory and being, in fact, wholly under the spell of his masterful personality, she took that preliminary conversation for granted, smiled mistily at her girl-adorers, murmured vague thanks and went her way.

At the club house on the links Gower met young Molyneux, with one of the duke's grandsons and several other men. Molyneux drew him aside.

"Gratters, old man!" he said. "I didn't know you'd gone all the way."

"What the hell do you mean?" demanded Gower.

"Come off it!" cried the delighted youth. "Damn good! What do I mean? Ha! Ha! Damn—er—jolly damn good, what?"

"Stop cackling like a lunatic and explain yourself. I understand you felici-

tate me on something. On what? I ask for information merely!"

Molyneux, sobered by his friend's sarcastic violence, gazed at him vacantly.

"Why—er—little Molly!" he stammered. "Engaged to her—all over the shop."

Gower gave him a sharp glance and turned away.

"Oh—thanks!" he said curtly. "I didn't understand at first. Thanks awfully. It surprised me so many people knew."

Turning on his heel, he strode away, cranked up his car and drove furiously and alone into the heart of the country.

II

Molly's marriage to Ernest Gower promised to fulfill every expectation of the bride's ingenious mother. Tradesmen, aware of the prosperity of the son-in-law, were lavish with credit. Mrs. Pardoe, anxious to make hay before the clouds returned, sold out a portion of her very modest capital, and used the proceeds to give an impression of newly discovered and illimitable resources. The overdraft was paid off; Doctor's Castle was redecorated; even the "society" motor car was sold and substituted by one of a later pattern. Alfred's professional needs, on the other hand, were thought to be amply met by his father's original two-seater. "We must not be extravagant, darling," she said. "After all, I owe that much to the breadwinner!" The way of the adventurous widow was further made smooth by the personal subjugation of her new son-in-law. Gower, like most men of athletic habit and heedless courage, was a puppet in the hands of a clever woman. He loved Molly for her rosy prettiness and the submissive wistfulness that was really lack of character. He fell a victim to his mother-in-law, because she treated him with that semi-gracious, semi-confiding intimacy that middle-aged but elegant women

find so telling with men younger than themselves. One of their earliest interviews claimed him as her slave. She lay on her drawing-room sofa, the suave lines of her flowing dress emphasizing the dreamy refinement of her face. Ever since she was a young girl and had overheard a foolish friend of her mother's liken her to Cophetua's beggar maid, she had moved and dressed as befitted a Burne-Jones beauty. Now, in her mature age, the task became even simpler, because the type immortalized by that famous painter is really a type of maturity with the lines washed out and lends itself better to reproduction in terms of the languor of womanhood than in those of the taut energy of girl-ishness.

She gave him her slim, white hand.

"And I have to welcome you," she smiled, "though you come to rob me! Stand a moment. Let me look at you——" Then, slightly, but not too deeply under her breath, she murmured: "A man indeed!"

Gower colored and stood in the embarrassment for which she had schemed. To right and left she waved a graceful surrender.

"You strong men come and carry off our girls, leaving mothers to weep. But you love Molly and she loves you, and therefore she laughs for joy of you and you for joy of her. So I must laugh with you." Her voice became suddenly intimate in its practicality. "Now sit down and tell me about your house and where the honeymoon will be, and whether I can do my little share in getting things ready for your return."

By degrees she led him to talk of settlements, of furnishing, even of linen and the like. Hypnotized, he undertook this and that, imploring her to act on his behalf as purchaser, promising to foot such bills as might accumulate in the fitting preparation of a home for the girl whose heart was his. When he left her Mrs. Pardoe lay back with a

sigh of happiness. Behind closed lids she saw visions of lama blankets, of delicious sheets and pillow cases, of beautiful clothes, of Eastern rugs and frail, exquisite porcelain. She mistrusted her judgment of quantity. Maybe, to be on the safe side, she would order a little in excess of actual requirements. Ernest would hate meanness. Besides, what was not immediately needed could remain at Doctor's Castle. She would be willing to house it for the young people; quite willing—in the circumstances.

And so Molly married and went honeymooning with her man; and her mother, financially carefree, stocked and furnished the bride's home and incidentally, her own home also.

But as time passed, the shelter of the Gower check book threatened to recede from over the head of the household in the High Street. Now that Molly and Ernest were on the spot it was harder to use them as guarantee. Things, moreover, were getting bad again. Alfred's practice could not be said to be shrinking visibly, but he had undeniably less press of work than had his father in his latter days.

"You are early," Mrs. Pardoe would say. "Your dear father never got in before a quarter past. But then we others are the gainers. I am glad your work is manageable. Your poor father was perpetually overdone."

Alfred longed to retort that his father was a slow worker, and that where twenty minutes were once required ten only nowadays sufficed. But he dared not. He knew that his mother, when it suited her, treated the memory of her husband with oblique but petulant ridicule. On the other hand, when equally it was convenient, she spoke of him as a doctor in ten thousand. Were he to venture forth on the side of criticism, she would range herself instantly in passionate defense of the dead. He feared his mother, with her smoothly

cruel tongue, and therefore, greatly though he longed to excuse his apparent idleness, he dared not.

"No one is ill," he would rejoin awkwardly jocose. "Retsworth is becoming a health resort. Perhaps when the weather breaks——"

But he knew that he reasoned falsely and his mother knew that he knew. So they played out their farce of mutual deception—she silkily depreciatory, he evasive and falling daily more deeply into discouragement.

With the third and fourth half-yearly accounting of the new régime the truth might no longer be concealed. Patients had fallen away, were falling away in increasing numbers. Alfred, struggling with his own faint-heartedness, succumbed wholly before his mother's insolent sarcasm. His head on his arms, he let her anger pass over his misery and beyond it. To Hugh he poured out his troubles. The younger brother offered clumsy comfort, but was as little fitted to right parental injustice as was its immediate victim.

"Let's get away from this hole," he suggested.

"Get away!" cried Alfred bitterly. "How can we? She would refuse. And at least I make a little money here. Elsewhere even the governor's reputation would be lost to us, and I shall never do anything on my own. I am too stupid and—people do not like me."

"Rot, old man! Abso-bally-lutely! You used to be tophole. It's only the mater and her tantrums that put you off your stroke. Let's get away and leave her behind!"

This audacious proposal staggered the elder brother.

"What'll we live on?" he asked.

Hugh became confidential.

"Well, I know a fellow—got a turf commission business—and he said—and I said—and we both agreed—thousands, old dear, thousands——"

The recital jerked from slang to profanity and back again to slang. Alfred listened in bewilderment to as unsavory and speculated a program of existence as ever offered itself to a victim of failure and despair. At last he promised to consider matters.

"Sounds a bit steep to me," he said. "But I can't stand this life much longer. I'll think it over."

Meanwhile Mrs. Pardoe was in pursuit of her own interests.

"You are writing to Harrods, darling?" she would say during one of her long and frequent calls at the house of her married daughter. "Would you ask them to send me some things also? I quite forgot to write yesterday. Everything could come out together and perhaps the car could drop mine at home when you come past next. Give me a note of what I owe you."

For a while this method worked well enough, until Molly, now as closely identified with her husband and his well-being as ever she was previously with that of her own family, made objection to the rising debt.

"I wish you would pay me, mumsie. It's over fifty pounds now, and it makes my house accounts all wrong."

"Sweet child, forgive me! I am such a careless old woman. I'll send it you this very evening. By the way, *will* you settle with Celeste for me when you post your check to-night? Then I can put it on what I am sending you and save two stamps! If you'd do it now, I'd post it in Retsworth for you."

But neither the household debt nor the money paid to Celeste nor any other of the outstanding obligations due to Molly made their promised appearance. Two days went by without a word of explanation. The young wife felt irritated and ill at ease. Her husband was carelessly generous in the matter of money, but he liked a monthly statement of account and this, unless her mother paid some part of the sums ow-

ing, Molly was unable honestly to prepare. "I'll tell Ernie to-night!" she decided. "This very evening. It can't trail on like this." In the fervor of her determination she began a sudden investigation into past expenditure. Turning over old receipts she chanced on those for monies spent at the time of her wedding. The totals appalled her. Closer examination immediately showed what had occurred. She was at first horrified at what she took to be her own carelessness. The next moment the true implication of this waste of her husband's money struck her like a whip. She flamed to fury against her mother and in that moment of anger she saw a thousand incidents of the past in the fierce light of a new and pitiless understanding. For a moment her confiding inexperience blinked in the glare of the terrible revelation. For a moment she could not realize in full detail this dazzling exposure of her mother's dishonesty. But incredulity and bewilderment alike gave way to full and disgusted comprehension. In an instant she was all condemnation. Every action and motive of her mother, from before her father's death to this last and meanest subterfuge, repelled and sickened her. Then something of Gower came to strengthen her, and it was with tears in her heart, but dry-eyed and firm in loyalty to her husband whose good nature had, as she now realized, been wickedly abused, that she sat down to write to her mother a letter that might well mark the end of the closest intimacy humanity can know. It was a terrible task—the writing of this letter. To bring accusation against any one were hard enough to Molly's affectionate and trusting nature; to accuse and to reproach her own mother was well-nigh impossible. But the thought of her husband gave her strength. Word by word she fought down her instinctive hatred of the things she was determined to do. At

last the letter was finished. Closing it down, she went to her room and flung herself on the bed. Ernest must know everything that night. She felt exhausted and apprehensive. Perhaps if she could sleep a little—— He would be home in an hour and a half. She would lie down till he came——

But when Ernest Gower came home he was beyond such trivial worries as those that made miserable his pretty and loving wife. They brought his body back, all twisted and shattered as it was, and laid it on a bed with a sheet drawn over his handsome face. Once too often had he put horsemanship to the test. The legend that no horse existed too wild for Gower to master had gone the way of many legends, for now he was dead, and his back and two of his fine limbs were broken, but the horse that killed him was not dead, nor would its evil spirit yield, save to the bullet that on the morrow would end perforce its dangerous career.

Ernest Gower had been buried six weeks and the young widow, still white and silent under the shock of her loss, was living on in the house that was now her own. She was under the natural care of her loving mother. Mrs. Pardoe had hastened to Warrenders, when first the news of disaster had reached the town. She had found her daughter prostrate; the house in confusion and lamentation. Without opposition she had assumed command; interviewed lawyers and officials; made funeral arrangements; controlled the fitful energies of a disordered staff. Maternal care and the exigencies of practical duty kept her at Molly's side. Six weeks she had been at Warrenders and each week she had found the house more wholly to her taste. During those weeks she had been unremitting in the service of her daughter. Molly had lain seriously ill for ten days before she took the turn and began to struggle

slowly back to health. Now she was downstairs and about again, but listless and dull-eyed, plaintively obedient to those around her, desiring nothing, observing nothing. Mrs. Pardoe announced that they would go abroad, and Molly assented. Mrs. Pardoe thought Hugh had better accompany them. "A man is so useful," she explained, "with all those nasty customs people and frontier tickets." Again, and without comment on her mother's conception of European travel, Molly assented. Finally, Mrs. Pardoe proposed that a circular letter be obtained from Molly's banker's but in her mother's name, so that the petty finances of the trip could be regulated without constant troublesome reference to the invalid. Once more Molly assented, but this time across the sluggish pool of her mind crept a tiny ripple, as though some forgotten memory had stirred beneath its apathy, bringing back a hint of other and less grievous days. The mental movement, slight though it was, showed itself in her eyes. Mrs. Pardoe remarked it and understood its significance. On the night following Gower's death, while hastening from her daughter's sick bed on some errand of nursing care, she had passed into the boudoir of the young mistress of Warrenders. On the bureau was a letter addressed to herself, and Mrs. Pardoe, never unobservant even in moments of anxiety, had put it in her pocket for examination at a more convenient time. Once aware of its contents she awoke to the fortunate coincidence of the tragedy of Ernest Gower. The letter she scrupulously destroyed, and thereafter devoted herself to keeping from the mind of her daughter all memory of its existence. When now she noticed in Molly's indifferent eyes the fleeting gleam of intelligence provoked by a direct reference to money matters, she told herself that, although the task of obliterating

all memory of that dreadful letter was still unachieved, it had been well begun. Two or three months abroad might be trusted to complete the work.

Events proved her to be right. When the travelers reached Retsworth once again, Molly was more nearly her old self than seemed at one time possible. She had reverted entirely to the days before her marriage when home and home influences and, in particular, the personality of her mother, ruled her amiable and impressionable mind. Gower, save as a formula in explanation of the melancholy that now lurked perpetually in the shadows of her brain, might never have existed. His time of domination was over; that of Mrs. Pardoe had entered on its second phase.

Satisfied that her daughter was once again properly susceptible to the power of maternal suggestion, the mother prepared to put matters to a final test. From Warrenders she paid visits to the old house in Retsworth, returning with stories of incompetent and thieving servants, of squalor and quarrels and decay. Hugh, after the foreign tour, had drifted about the town, betting and drinking. The agent's office, that formerly occupied at least some part of his time, was now a thing of the past. He refused to return to it, and his mother, intent on her own scheming, saw little gain in forcing him to submit. Alfred, in his mother's absence, had really tried to make up some of the ground previously lost in the campaign for sick room patronage. But he sank back to his old, sullen timidity as soon as she was once more on the spot, first lashing him with the torment of her irony, and then irritating, with contemptuous flattery, the wounds she had already laid open. Dorothea, in everything but garb and place of residence, was now vowed wholly to the service of her Maker. That she was prevented by the hated claims of domesticity from actual taking of the veil made her sour-tempered

and querulous. She greeted Mrs. Pardoe with savage resentment.

"I have slaved here for a year," she said, "and it is now your turn. If you can quiet the tradesmen and keep the place tidy and buy Hugh whisky and give Alfred his meals on nothing a week, you are welcome to the triumph. I'm done with it."

Mrs. Pardoe saw at once that in this embittered woman she had a potential ally. She answered her softly, made elaborate inquiries into church topics and progress, sympathized tenderly with her daughter's troubles during recent months.

"You have saved your sister's life, darling," she concluded, "and He will remember it. Now the time of your reward is coming."

And so, ultimately, the stage was set for the final tableau. It represented the boudoir at Warrenders, the very boudoir in which had lain the letter, designed to sever a daughter from her mother. Mrs. Pardoe lay on the sofa; Molly Gower sat on a low chair by her side.

"Yes," the mother was saying, "I must leave you now. Those poor dears in the High Street need my help. They have a hard life, for things are not what they were. I am so deeply thankful that you at least are comfortably provided for. Perhaps we may see you from time to time. It has been lovely for me to have you to myself again for so long; quite like old times when you were a tiny girl and I would take you away after some illness to lodgings by the sea. But then"—she smiled with wry bravery and her voice trembled—"then we used to come home together, for it was one home in those days—not two—"

"Mumsie dearest," interrupted Molly, carried happily into a sea of sentiment by her mother's affecting words, "once and for all I beg you not to leave me! Give up that old house and come here—all of you. I cannot live here alone.

I've told you often and often how I want you to come. You shall do things just as you like and it shall be more your house than mine. *Please, darling mumsie!*"

She wound her arms round her mother's neck. For a while nothing was said. The two women clung together—the cheek of the elder resting on her daughter's hair. For Mrs. Pardoe it was a supreme moment. Three times already she had refused this suggestion, feeling uncertain of the permanent sincerity that had prompted it. Now there was no doubt. Now at last, victory was really hers.

"Dear, loving, generous child," she

said softly. "You have conquered me. I cannot let you be lonely. Perhaps also my experience may save you troubles and disappointments. So be it, then. For us Doctor's Castle is over. Dorothea shall go into the convent she longs for. Alfred shall give up his work, poor boy. Hugh shall look after the horses and the estate. This shall be our home—mine and yours and your dear brothers."

And once more the two heads rested tenderly side by side. The silence of the luxurious room was broken *only*, and with sibilant gentleness, by Molly's sobbing. She was crying for happiness.



Do we not know that the essential element of love is a belief in its own eternity?—*Somerset Maugham.*



ALL women are alike. There is no choice between animated fashion plates.—*Henry Harland.*



LET him not think himself loved by any, who loves none.—*Epictetus.*



LOVE heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself.—*Hindu proverb.*



THEY say that one should never return to the first love, nor look at the rose which one admired the evening before.—*Theophile Gautier.*



No man can love two women at one time, though men have deluded themselves with that romantic notion.—*Storm Jameson.*



EACH heart imagines itself to have been the first to tremble at those very sensations that awakened the hearts of the first *beings*, and that will awaken the hearts of the last.—*Guy de Maupassant.*



WHEN men have loved and recovered from love a sufficient number of times, they find that any fresh experience of it, even if they should be tempted to wish for this, would be only folly for themselves and cruelty for others.—*W. H. Mallock.*

By Elizabeth Bowen

Author of



"Encounters"

The

Evil That Men Do

AT the corner by the fire station, where Southampton Row is joined by Theobalds Road, a little man, hurrying back to his office after the lunch hour, was run over by a motor lorry. He had been stepping backward to avoid a taxi when worse befell him. What was left of him was taken to hospital and remained for some days unidentified, as no papers of any sort were to be found in his pockets.

The morning after this occurrence a lady living on the outskirts of a country town received a letter in an unfamiliar writing. The appearance of the envelope startled her; it was so exactly what she had been expecting for the last four days. She turned it over, biting her lip. The dining room was darker than usual; it was a dull, still morning, and she had risen and dressed with growing apprehension. Her husband was away, and the windows seemed farther than ever now that she occupied his place and breakfasted alone. She poured out a cup of tea and raised the plated cover of a

dish. The sight of a lonely sausage decided her. She opened the letter.

Before she had read to the end she leaned forward to think, with her knuckles doubled under her chin. Other people have that sinister advantage over one of being able to see the back of one's head. For the first time in her life she had the uncomfortable sense that somebody had done so, that somebody had not only glanced but was continuously staring. Her husband did not make her feel like this.

"Fancy," she thought. "Just an hour and ten minutes exactly. Just that little time, and all these years I never knew. Think of living among all these people and never knowing how I was different."

She folded up the letter for a moment, and began betting against herself on his Christian name. "Evelyn," she thought, "or possibly Arthur, or Philip." As a matter of fact it was Charles.

"I know you so well," the letter continued. "Before you drew your gloves

off I knew that you were married. You have been living on the defensive for years. I know the books you read, and what you see in the streets you walk in of that town with the terrible name. You live in a dark house looking over a highway. Very often you stand in the light of the windows, leaning your head against the frame, and trees with dull leaves send the sunshine and shadow shivering over your face. Footsteps startle you, you start back in the crowded room. The morning you get this letter, go out bareheaded into your garden and let the wind blow the sunshine through your hair. I shall be thinking of you then.

"Your husband and your children have intruded on you. Even your children hurt you with their little soft hands, and yet you are as you always were, untouched and lonely. You came slowly out of yourself at that poetry-reading, like a nymph coming out of a wood. You came toward me like a white thing between trees, and I snatched at you as you turned to go back——"

Her cheeks burned.

"My goodness," she cried, biting her thumb-nail. "Fancy anybody being able to write like that! Fancy living at 28 Abiram Road, West Kensington. I wonder if he's got a wife, I do wonder." Delicious warmth crept down her. "Poetry! I thought he wrote poetry. Fancy him having guessed I read it!"

"I am going to send you my poetry. It is not published yet, but I am having it typewritten. When it is published there shall be just your one initial on the dedication page. I cannot bear the thought of your living alone among those strange people who hurt you—familiar, unfamiliar faces and cold eyes. I know it all; the numb mornings, the feverish afternoons; the intolerable lamplit evenings, night——"

"Now," she thought, "I'm sure he has a wife."

"—and your wan, dazed face turning without hope to the first gleams at the window——"

Ah, guilty, guilty that she slept so well!

The cook came in.

When the meals for the day were ordered and her breakfast half-surreptitiously eaten with the letter tucked inside the tea-cozy, she went upstairs to her room and tried on the hat she had worn in London, folding the side-flaps of the mirror round her so that she could see her profile. She leaned forward, gazing at a point in space represented by the prismatic stopper of a scent-bottle. With a long, slow breath she went slowly through the action of drawing off a glove.

"Living," she said aloud, "for years and years on the defensive." She looked into the mirror at the neat, quiet room behind her, with the reflected pinkness from curtains and carpet over its white wall, and the two mahogany bedsteads with their dappled eider-downs. There were photographs of her aunts, her children and her brother-in-law's wife along the mantelpiece, a print of the Good Shepherd above the wash stand, and "Love among the Ruins" over the beds. On a bracket were some pretty vases of French china Harold had given her at Dieppe, and a photogravure of the Luxemburg gardens she had given Harold. In a book-case were several selections from the poets, beautifully bound in colored suède, and another book, white with gold roses, called "The Joy of Living." She got up and slipped a novel from the local library into the bottom of a drawer.

"What on earth would be the good," she reasoned, "of going out into the garden when there is no sun and no wind and practically no garden?" She considered her reflection.

"I don't feel I could go down the High Street in this hat. There must be something queer about it. Half past nine: Harold will be back at half past eleven. I wonder if he's bringing me anything from London."

She put a good deal of powder on her face, changed her hat and earrings, selected a pair of half-soiled gloves from a drawer and went downstairs. Then she ran quickly up again and wiped off all the powder.

"Like a wood nymph," she murmured, "coming out of a wood."

When she was halfway down the High Street she found that she had forgotten her shopping basket and her purse.

Harold came home at half past eleven and found his wife still out.

He whistled for some minutes in the hall, looked vainly into her bedroom, the kitchen and the nursery, then went round to the office to put in some work. Harold was a solicitor. Coming in again at lunch time he met her crossing the hall. She looked at him vaguely.

"Why, you *are* back early!"

"I was back two hours ago," said he.

"Did you have a nice time in London?"

He explained, with his usual patience, that one does not expect to have a nice time when one goes up to London on business.

"Of course," he said, "we're all out to get what we can out of London. We all, as you might say, 'pick it over.' Only what I'm out for isn't pleasure—I leave that to you, don't I?—I'm out for other pickings."

"Yes, Harold."

"This is very good beef."

"Yes, isn't it," she cried, much gratified. "I got it at Hoskins'—Mrs. Peck deals there, she told me about it. It is much cheaper than at Biddle's, twopence less in the pound. I have to cross over to the other side of the street

now when I pass Biddle's. I haven't been there for three days, and he looks as though he were beginning to suspect——"

She sighed sharply; her interest flagged.

"Ah, yes?" said Harold, encouragingly.

"I'm tired of buying beef," she said resentfully.

"Oh, come, tired of going down the High Street! Why, what else would you——"

She felt that Harold was odious. He had not even brought her anything from London.

"All my day," she cried, "messed up with little things!"

Harold laid down his knife and fork.

"Oh, do please go on eating!"

"Yes," said Harold. "I was only looking for the mustard. What were you saying?"

"Got any plans this afternoon?" he said after luncheon, according to precedent.

"I'm going to write letters," she said, pushing past him into the drawing-room.

She shut the door behind her, leaving Harold in the hall. There was something in doing that, "living on the defensive." But were there any corners, any moments of her life for the last eight years which Harold had not pervaded? And, horrible, she had not only lived with him but liked him. At what date, in fact, had she ceased liking Harold? Had she ever——?

She put her fingers quickly in her ears as though somebody had uttered the guilty thing aloud.

Seating herself at the writing table, she shut her eyes and thoughtfully stroked her eyebrows with the pink feather at the tip of a synthetic quill pen. She drew the feather slowly down the line of one cheek and tickled herself under the chin with it, a delightful sensation productive of shivers.

"Oh," she sighed, with a shuddering breath, "how beautiful, beautiful you are."

The top of a bus, lurching and rattling through obscurer London, the cold air blowing on her throat, moments under lighted windows when their faces had been mutually discernible, the sudden apparition of the conductor which had made him withdraw his hands from her wrist, their conversation—which she had forgotten. "Ride, ride together, for ever ride." When the bus stopped they had got down and got onto another. She did not remember where they had said good-by. Fancy, all that from going to a poetry-reading instead of a picture house. Fancy! And she hadn't even understood the poetry.

She opened her eyes and the practical difficulties of correspondence presented themselves. One could not write that sort of letter on Azure Bond; the note paper he had used had been so indefinitely *right*, somehow. She did not know how to address him. He had not begun with a "Dear" anything, but that did seem rather abrupt. One could not call him "Dear Mr. Simmonds" after an hour and ten minutes of such bus-riding; how could you call a person Mr. Simmonds when he said you were a nymph? Yet she couldn't take to "Charles." Everything practical, she found, had been crowded into the postscript of his letter—people said that women did that. He said he thought it would be better if she were to write to him at his office in Southampton Row; it was an insurance office, which somehow gave her confidence. "Dear Charles," she began.

It was a stiff little letter.

"I know it is," she sighed, distressfully rereading it. "It doesn't sound abandoned, but how can I sound abandoned in this drawing-room?" She stood up, self-consciously. "The cage that it is," she said aloud, "the intolerable cage!" and began to walk about

among the furniture. "Those chintzes are pretty, I am glad I chose them. And those sweet ruched satin cushions. If he came to tea I would sit over here by the window, with the curtains drawn a little behind me—no, over here by the fireplace, it would be in winter and there would be nothing but firelight. But people of that sort never come to tea; he would come later on in the evening and the curtains would be drawn, and I should be wearing my—Oh, 'like a nymph.' How trivial it all seems."

And Harold had wondered what there would be left for her to do if she didn't go down the High Street. She would show him. But if she went through with this to the end Harold must never know, and what would be the good of anything without Harold for an audience?

She again reread the letter she had written:

"Of course my husband has never entered into my inner life——" and underlined the "of course" with short, definite lines. It was quite true; she left books of poetry about and Harold never glanced at them; she sat for hours gazing at the fire or—as Charles said—out of the window and Harold never asked her what she was thinking about; when she was playing with the children she would break off suddenly and turn away her face and sigh, and Harold never asked her what was the matter. He would go away for days and leave her alone in the house with nobody to talk to but the children and the servants and the people next door. But of course solitude was her only escape and solace; she added this as a postscript.

Harold entered.

"I left this," he said, "down at the office this morning by mistake. I thought I had forgotten it in London—I should not like to have done so. I was very much worried. I did not

mention the matter as I did not want you to be disappointed." He extended a parcel. "I don't know whether it is pretty, but I thought you might like it."

It was the most beautiful handbag, silver-gray, with the delicate bloom on it of perfect suède—darker when one stroked it one way, lighter the other. The clasp was real gold and the straps by which one carried it of exactly the right length. Inside it had three divisions; drawing out the pads of tissue paper one revealed a lining of ivory moiré, down which the light shot into the shadows of the sumptuously scented interior in little trickles like water. Among the silk folds of the center compartment were a purse with a gold clasp, a gold case that might be used for either cigarettes or visiting cards, and a darling little gold-backed mirror. There was a memorandum tablet in an outer pocket, and a little book of *papier poudré*.

They sat down on the sofa to examine it, their heads close together.

"Oh," she cried, "you don't mind, Harold? *Papier poudré*?"

"Not," said Harold, "if you don't put on too much."

"And look—the little wee mirror. Doesn't it make me have a little wee face?"

Harold breathed magnanimously over the mirror.

"Harold," she said, "you are wonderful. Just what I wanted."

"You can take it out shopping to-morrow morning, down the High Street."

She shut the bag with a click, brushed away the marks of her finger tips, and swung it by the straps from her wrist, watching it through half-closed eyes.

"Harold!" she sighed ineffably.

They kissed.

"Shall I post your letters?" he inquired.

She glanced toward the writing table. "Would you wait a moment? Just a moment; there's an address I must write, and a postscript."

"My little wee wife," said Harold contentedly.

"P.P.S.," she added. "You must not think that I do not love my husband. There are moments when he touches very closely my *exterior life*."

She and Harold and the handbag went as far as the post together, and she watched the letter swallowed up in the maw of the pillar-box.

"Another of your insurance policies?" asked Harold.

"Only just to know the general particulars," she said.

She wondered for some time what Charles would think when he came to the last postscript, and never knew that Fate had spared him this.



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The Slave of Sacramento

THERE is no splendor in the color gray, but its interruptions of green and gold can add to their glories, and the village square was resplendent.

Padre Pedro was away from home. Indeed, he was entirely removed from Terassa. Otherwise, such a thing could not have happened. The sun would likely have come up just as it now had done, planting these prolonged gray pictures on the shimmering gold green of the square grass, but human history would have had a dissimilar chapter. He had gone to Barcelona on an ecclesiastical matter, happy, as if for a gay purpose, and for an excellent, though casual, reason had warded the town into the keeping of Benito, a pious and simple soul and body of long standing in the village vineyarders. And thus, at seven o'clock to-day the eyes of the priest's little house in the Chasm Road were closed in broad daylight, as if it had determined to have a holiday

in spirit along with him, and, once his back was turned, to see no more of what went on at home than he did.

It might well have glanced up at the village green. The sight there was soothing and pretty. The big planeta trees had got their likenesses taken and set down directly before them, out of all proportion amid the many-colored shimmer; and between these giant, soldierly designs were statuelike groups of peasant men and, in their turn, their long gray caricatures. They were supposedly on their paths to work, but talk is enjoyable, whether stupid or not, and they were having their own fun with Benito, who ought to have chid them down the highway, but who was the stiffest, most pensive owner of a shadow on the whole golden and dewy green. The padre, still blacker, would be back to-day, and Benito would be glad of it, some of them grinningly said, for he took life so seriously. And somewhat ashamed of this irony, the

better halves of their natures started their bodies and their suave shadows into a gradual movement toward the highway.

Up it, a different figure was approaching—that of Rosa, an elderly lady who abided, when she behaved herself and stayed at home, at the foot of Terassa's peaked hill. She was the padre's chief intimate, and had decried his visit to the city. He loved her sense and experience, and would have bade her care for the town in his absence, but for her insistent quarrels with him just before he left. So violent and intrusive were they, that they had given rise to his sudden thought of Benito.

Padre Pedro had, like the bulk of Terassa, somewhat passed Benito by, simply because he was so simply good. In odd moments of flashing thought the priest had realized this, and wondered how he might some time give the grave young man a public tribute.

Benito was certainly a man to trust. His religiousness, and worse than that, his virtue, were matters as near to mockery as the generous town ever came. He was an old young man, whose thirty and a few years had all been spent—if Benito could be said to spend anything—in Terassa; the gentle years of a visionary, a religioso, albeit he was an everyday vineyarder, humdrum, innocent, pious, quiet, and, as Terassa knew and God had reason to find out at church, saving.

For these qualities the padre had loved him always so sincerely, and been always so satisfied in this affection, that he had largely let expression slide, and thereby, to the semioccasional tweak of his conscience, let Benito slide, too. Every one knew how sweetly, deeply devout he was, but some day every one must know it with an underscore, thought the padre, and he had abruptly emphasized it three days ago, by telling him and the town, in each other's presence, that nothing ill must occur

to Terassa while he himself was absent. This conjured cheers and smiles and one bitten lip—Rosa's.

Rosa's thin stately person had now topped the highway. She approached Benito.

"The padre will be back, now, at any moment," she said, "so Terassa will doubtless stand intact despite his reckless absence. But you are a fool, Benito, and the padre knows it. If you have any glimmering of sense at all, will you kindly tell me why he left the town in your care?"

Benito had been gazing rapturously down into the yellow vega, his mystic eyes hitting, on their way, the red and gold poppy fields where the padre's thirty little orphan boys, unlike the grown vineyarders who should certainly have behaved at least as well, were already at work; and he started, causing the first disturbance to his placid gray shadow, at Rosa's crisp insinuation.

"Rosa, Rosa!" he said painfully. "Indeed, I may be a fool, Rosa, but the padre, when present, rules the town with kindness, and perhaps it was because I have always tried never to be unkind to anybody."

"Come, come," said Rosa, "you need not try to singe my handsome silver hair with that kind of coals! May your devout authority succeed, the half day or half hour left to it, you poor, admirable soul! I really must leave you, for I am up, out, and up the highway early to-day to play a joke on Inés and Amarillis, for I confess that with the padre out of town, the time is tiresome—all the rest of the community is human, and there is no one to horrify!"

Benito fell to his religious visioning again.

"We must go to work!" said some one Tonino probably, and his words hummed about in the stillness.

The rolling plain before her and a mysteriously beautiful chasm to her

back, Terassa's accentuated hill rose confidently out of Catalonia like some suave little volcano, its fires pacifically hidden as by an emerald shroud striped with the coral color of her vineyard terraces; and it was as if pitched forth by a volcano that a great gray thing, tall and impressive as an uprooted, live planeta-tree shadow, rushed toward them, among them, from behind them, indeed, directly out of the chasm. For she had swooped silently in from the steep little path back of the village fonda.

"You town! Men, men! I have wares to sell!" she cried. "Men, village, men, men, go get your women! It is a public matter! But no—listen to this first: Have you a priest here? Is there a priest in town?"

"No," stammered Tonino, "he is out of town!"

They had all turned, but none of them had yet seen her, because they had been all so taken up with her great, darting shadow. Their eyes were still occupied by it, and especially by its waving arms. Soon, however, they were studying her thin, vivid person, terribly vibrant in its posed standstill, and understanding, or trying to understand, her swift, loud, commanding words. Her face, straight toward the big, merciless, gold sun, it was some minutes before they deciphered and priced.

"Thank God for that! Somehow I knew it would all fit my way! Go get your women, then! This business of mine needs women on the spot! I am a woman, by the way, if your dazed minds have wondered. Yes, I tell you I have wares to sell! Never mind my dress, its shape or sex—it was a skirt at sunrise. This is a public matter, I have told you! Go get your women, for this matter is public!"

It was, by this time. The men did not have to go for their women or anybody else's, who might, indeed, have

been represented by this one startling female, whose face was now penetrating to most of the minds near by it, with its neatly dressed hair, capping a fine, white brow and, in effect, a whole set of delicate, desperate features, pale, quivering-mouthed, and red-lipped, glittering-eyed and, throughout, alight with a dancing rage that gave its whiteness a positive appearance of color which seemed to concentrate in the biting, slender, brilliantly pinkish lips.

The men ventured nearer to her, as if they remembered she had been first their public property, and as if, by instinct, chivalrously to encourage her words. But she needed no encouragement. She was waiting only for the bustle to subside, and even before it could, her pent voice gushed out again.

"A public matter! It must be completely public! I have called for you women, but mind you, it is to be only men that I deal with. I am a married woman, and to-day at seven o'clock it is still, in God's name, men, men with which I am determined to deal!"

"Is the whole town here? There is a little boy; there comes another up your highway; there is an old woman; there is a married one; there is a pretty one!"

It was Simpatuca, a trainer of parrots, who, by accident, belonged to the town. With her sensitive hands lifted in horror, she was swiftly motioning her way forward through the men.

"Come at once to my house! You are sick for food and friends! Stop talking! Come with me instantly!"

"No, no!" laughed the woman. "I have wares to sell! I have come here for business, and the women are for witnesses! Look you, are there men with money in this pretty little town?"

She raised her graphic arms, and the great shadow of her was like a desolate windmill whose sails fled over the heads of the people and down the highway.

"Did you take me for a mountebank,

with a new, smart introduction? With soap to sell?"

A sigh of relief came from many a throat, and a glad titter of good nature went from lip to lip, male and female. Hands sought purses.

"Give us your soap!"

But her caustic laugh cut the air again, freezing the generous fingers.

"Soap?"

Her word seemed to scathe them as simpletons for their leniency, but her voice, as it glittered on like a cleaver, left them no pause for resentment.

"Understand me quickly! I have told you I am a married woman. Let that fact go to hell—I have sent it there! I deal with men, with you women as listeners. Who has nine hundred pesetas? What man, I mean? That is my price! I have come to sell myself to the man who wants me and can and will pay that for me! That is the amount that I have cost my husband! Are you married, any of you? You women, I mean now! Do you know what marriage is? Well, I have altered matters! And he knows it, by this time! Who wants me? I will slave and work and love and beat my head on the floor, for any man who will pay nine hundred for it! I mean it! Stop staring! This is an auction! Come!"

There was now a thick crowd of Terassans on the green, with moving streamers of hastening newcomers, but her queerly theatrical figure was backed, as by a classical stage drop, by the columned vestibule of the village inn. There were no people behind her, for all who came were anxious to see her face, and banked themselves back of the flank of men. She was constantly moving, swaying her body if her arms were still, as if either in a trick to attract eyes, or from hectic exhaustion. Incredulous gasps and hysterical titters were greeting her.

"Stop that!" she cried. "There is no time for it, and I mean what I say.

Nine hundred, I told you! Well, the nearest to nine hundred! And under that figure, he would give me holidays, in which I would earn the rest by public work, vineyards, or lace making, to reach this sum I have cost this husband of mine! Who bids for me? One peseta, ten pesetas! Come!"

For a long moment there was horrified silence, which was ended by a concerted movement of the women toward her, and their pitiful exclamations.

"You must eat! You are sick! You do not know what you are saying! We will entertain you and be kind to you!"

"I am not sick!" she cried, and with the loud imperiousness of her voice and the fierce authority of her gesture, the gaping crowd at last focused her, realized and appreciated her desperate person and the desperation of her purpose.

"Who will buy? Here are my goods before you! Is there not one among you in the market? Some one who would like a human dog to beat, a cart and horse to plod errands, a property to be loved by, or not, as he chose, in any manner? I have been married, I tell you! I still am, until you have bought me! When does your priest return? Hasten, for he would stop the matter! Is there no one interested?"

"I am very much interested, indeed!" said Rosa, pushing rudely through the crowd, with Amarillis, the timidest lady in the town, and Inés, the most unfortunate of character, clinging to her arms and unaware that the strange episode had delivered them from misfortune at her hands.

"Frankly," continued Rosa, scanning her up and down from head to feet and back, "if I were either a dozen men or a half of one, I would not give two cents for you! But as a woman in my position, if you will wash my dishes, help me plague these two fools whom you see here with me, and do my fighting for me with the padre when I am

too busy, I will give you fifty pesetas, twenty dollars Mexican. Of course, you will not consider this, but I am trying to start the fun, for as you cleverly surmise, our padre may return at any moment. What you propose sounds crazy, but thin and homely as you are, you are certainly in earnest, which makes your case interesting. So if you like, I will take charge and help you out. Pardon the low figure I offered. Who will give a hundred pesetas for this interesting creature?"

She stepped behind the woman and faced the crowd. Comment, emotion, hysterical laughter were running through it. The white-faced, quivering woman embraced Rosa.

"I thank you! It must be a man I shall sell to, but I will give you friendship for this hereafter, if my owner gives me leave and time for it! See, people, one of your townsfolk credits me! I am honest, and you must know what you are buying. I have fled my husband—the whole five years of him! I must be bought, and then I will be myself and a slave to my owner—a worthy slave! Look at me! Consider me! Buy me!"

"For this," exclaimed Rosa, "there will be the devil, namely the padre, to pay; but I am in bad odor with him already for several matters, so I may as well afford it! Now, there is no time to think out what this amounts to, but at a swift look it seems to me that the whole matter is indecent, yet without being improper! It is a most dramatic thing, with all sexes and entire families standing about to make it passable, and we must hasten while the padre is still out of gunshot. Come, now, who wants her?"

Still not a man of all the men stirred, for, though they were fascinated enough by the haggard woman and wild bargain displayed before them, they were thinking mainly of Benito and his amusing authority over them, and won-

dering at what point he would dare it, with his childlike piety, against Rosa's outrageous pastime.

"Look you at him!" ran the whisper of one vineyarder to another. "He is white with horror!" "Yes," ran a laughing whisper in return, "we must help out the poor fellow when we have had our fun!"

"But the woman—she is not funny!" ejaculated some one.

And she was not. She had stepped forward from Rosa, her thin arms cast forth, and was confronting them more nearly.

"Who will buy what I have to sell? Here it is before you: two legs, two arms, and a heart—somewhere. My face does not matter. I swear to you I am pretty when I sit quietly down and pretend I am happy!" And she smiled—a ghastly smile.

Again a shiver had gone through both men and women, but through the men especially, as they glanced sidewise at Benito.

"This is getting serious!"

"Rosa goes too far!"

"The padre was in earnest when he put him in charge of the town."

"He will hate Rosa bitterly for this—religious natures can hate worst of all!"

"Come, is there not one man in town?" cried Rosa.

"Yes," said a loud voice, sharply, harshly, and through a pathway of thoroughly terrified men and women, Benito came swiftly forward.

A little gasp fled up from everywhere, and Rosa shrank perceptibly back as she saw the deathly whiteness of his face, though the equally pallid woman held her ground and faced him. But he did not look at her. He looked straight at Rosa.

"I have nearly eight hundred pesetas saved," he said. "I want her, and I will buy her."

The silent green-and-golden square,

with its quiet groups of men standing about, had been changed to something like a caldron, and now back again to its quality of the frozen, as by miracle; and the woman suggested another miracle, like a painting that had not before been looked at properly.

She was neither big nor little. The face was authoritatively handsome. The gray, homemade, travel-rent clothes were elegant.

The horrified, stupefying hush was complete for several heavy moments, and broken then by but one sound, her triumphant cry, so musical in the very sharpness of its joy that it sucked all attention from Benito to herself, and abruptly crystallized her to the gazing crowd. She swept them with a long, penetrating look, and stood with out-thrown hands before them boldly, daringly, relief in every spiritual suggestion of her, palpitant in body, as if she were naked, and the entirety of her a wretched version of the human female gender through which past loveliness suddenly grew up to put on it vividness, dignity, femininity.

Her eyes were now deep brown and full of dancing, golden flecks; her hair, hard like carbon turning to diamond, was pure Irish blue-black; her slenderly beautiful lips were sweet, as if sweetness could be a color, and they were very pink. And they were articulate, as she swayed, with a motion of the impulsive arms, toward Benito.

"Bless you! God bless you! Indeed, I will make Him, when I have seen your money!"

But the white-faced Benito, though he was shivering in the astounded horror of his townspeople, and though his breast was violently heaving in an instinctive gesture toward her, seemed to give no heed to her words, nor to Rosa's which were now ringing excitedly over the people.

"This is wonderful! I have said there would be the devil to pay, and

there will! But I always stick to what I undertake, and I give her, going and going, et cetera, to Benito!"

He had turned to the foremost dazed little boy from the poppy fields.

"Felipe, go you to my house in the chasm, and to the cupboard, and for my eight hundred and more pesetas look you therein upon the third shelf, and to the right hand behind a teapot."

With a small hand, like a plaster, across his forehead, Felipe ran, and the woman cried out again, gladly triumphant as before, and directly faced him, not alone with all her new-found reality and hectic splendor, but crisply, swiftly expressive.

"My name is Beatriz. And I am as soft and likable, when I have a chance! The chances depend upon you—whether you want love—whether you are religious! Love does not matter to me now. I do not mind religion in a man as long as he is not my husband! I am to be your slave, you see, and how much better, easier! These gaping women know what I am talking about. It is my daring to say it that makes them gape!"

She addressed herself to them, singled out one and another and another with pointing finger; and every woman who was married, and every other woman who wanted to be, which together meant the whole female persuasion of Terrassa, craned forward, horribly fascinated.

"This, that you see, is what marriage has done! Look, look you at it! I was as lovely once as you, and you, and you—yes, yes indeed! And you see me desecrate it, this thing that shines in your young or your tired eyes! Have you worked all day in the house at loye, and been grinned at for it? Have you been the slight, pretty thing to a strong, handsome, stupid man? You see these ludicrous, half-dressed, half-naked arms reach out toward the neck of this man here, in the hope that some

time his money will reach my husband, and sit at the opposite side of the table from him, unused, unspent, not used, not spent, like me!"

She turned sharply about.

"I speak now to you. Your name is Rosa—I have heard some one call it. I will call you Brier." She laughed. "You are quick and sharp. I like you. For the money, dig me a hole in the ground. It must be put there, right in the eye of the public. Then no one would steal it. It will wait for him till he comes, should he come. Then the bargain will have been done, and I will be free. Free, for I have not sold my soul, you know. Barring to God, I mean—or Satan, however the question stands. Not to this man, have I? Nor my thoughts. Free, to bang my head on the floor for him! And I would do it, you know, indeed I would!"

She had turned again to Benito.

"To hell, though, with my virtues! You have bought me! I am honest, and I was telling you my facts. I am from Villa Cabades. We have lived for five-hundred-thousand-million years there, and five years, he and I. The five years, his. The others, mine. I have told him, by now, I was leaving. I am hatefully honest. I called in a friend yesterday. I told her it as a fable, over the cracked cup he had thrown at me once because there were grounds in the hot wine of it. She said the crack in it was fatal. I laughed, and said it was, and told her how a wife had left her husband once, because she could bear no more of him and cups, and had sold herself to the first man she could, and I said, as she shivered and shook and started to go home, 'Believe the tale first, and tell it thereafter when need be!' Well, it is eight o'clock this morning!"

And she paused for breath, and for a long, metal laugh.

"Facts, facts! He works, my husband, in a mill on the Llobregat, under

the railroad bridge leading to the Holy Mountain. Always we have looked over from Villa Cabades to the Holy Mountain, and across the table at each other, and at our marriage, there in that stony district. So am I stony. I have had no children. Might I not have had, perhaps, if he had loved me? It is a question. Happiness might have helped! It might! I dare to say so! But I am glad I have not! Human beings, once born, may quite possibly be unhappy in this world! And no one shall be on my account. You shall not be, man—I swear it! Remember, whatever your own nature as you know it, and for whatever sweetness you may get out of it, I will do what you tell me to, even to that beating of my head on the floor! I have said 'nobody' about giving pain. The brute! I bar him from all sayings, now I have succeeded in selling myself! I owe him nothing, once the money is paid! I am not myself; I am yours! When is your money coming? Has it been a minute, or an hour? Or could the child find it? Or did you mean it?"

"When is he coming? That is the point!" cried an ironical voice from somewhere in the crowd, and the woman turned swiftly in its direction and then as swiftly, alertly, toward Benito once more.

"That point must not fret you. I started toward Ruby and doubled like a hare in the vega. How can he track me? But I will be fair and tell you that he may. I figure, you see, and if you but knew him you would figure, too, that in his particular variety of rage he will go in a zigzag first, and then in a straight line, till he meets a wall or the ocean. If he should come here, it would be plain fate, and we need not scratch at fate till it scratches us. Then, we can defy it, no, he who buys me and I?"

There was defiance even toward Benito in her ringing voice, evidently be-

cause there was no color of the money through the sunlight as yet, but before the vibrations of her last sharp words had died away, Felipe came panting across the green, his outstretched hands like a chalice drawing down and expelling darts of shimmering gold.

A very shaft of shrill, joyous, golden tone went up from the woman's throat, and Rosa snatched at Felipe.

"Put it down here!" she commanded. "Inés and I will count it! Dig a hole, Amarillis! We must get you into the trouble, too. A shallow hole! That is what the great lady wanted!"

Great certainly in her defiant posture, the woman stood panting, while little old Amarillis did her dirty work, weeping under Rosa's unmerciful eye; and as the coins went to the clock tick of Inés' money-hungry tongue gently glinting, softly thudding, from the child's hands back into the earth they had come from, Terassa, with only smaller noises, and two cries from here and there of: "This is wicked!" "This positively must not be," stood otherwise silent.

And motionless; save for an almost unnoticed stepping aside of folk in one direct line, for the splitting through the crowd of one swift, big, black figure, that fetched a great undeviating shadow back of it and that faced her unexpectedly, silently from the front line of the people and then made itself heard in an imperious, passionate voice.

It was Padre Pedro.

"Who are you?" he commanded her. "I have seen, and see, as yet, nothing here but you! I have felt you, from the bottom of the highway! There is evil in my town. I have felt that! Have you brought it here? Where have you come from? What are you doing here?"

With her left hand flung out over the glittering hole and almost touch-

ing the bent head of her owner, she rang her voice back at him.

"I will tell you loudly and cheerfully! I am a stranger in your town, yet the property of it—a woman, a married one, a good one till this minute. I have run from Villa Cabades and my husband, to stop away from them both forever and ever, and, thanks to your absence, have sold myself, body, bones, and lifetime, to one of your townsmen—this one!"

From her crisp words, shining countenance, victorious posture, the grouped people, and the color of guilt suffusing the town, the priest grasped, in swift rudiments, the whole, horrid story; and then, his eyes ran, by instinct, down her arm and came to the bent head which its fingers almost touched.

His hand lifted, his own face bent to meet it, his own arm fled across his temples, all in one mutual impulse of abhorrence, and his voice joined them with three heart-broken syllables:

"Benito!"

When his arm had dropped, he looked into her eyes again for one brief instant.

"I will not talk to you yet. You are a stranger, you look starved; you are perhaps insane. But to this, my son, I will talk immediately. Benito, Benito! You who have been the example of Terassa! Whom I have loved, after the loving way of admiration! To whom I left her throughout my journey! Who have had such visions all your life, so lovely thoughts such as I have myself neglected! Can they have all gone for nothing—Benito!"

But Benito faced him, met his wet eyes, cut short his words, gazed, and continued to gaze, straight at him, his humble peasant face queerly handsome in its white, trembling daring.

"That is all of it true, and is still true and the same! For I have always, along with my beautiful, contenting visions, asked God to give me an ad-

venture of some sort, other than a vision in the bright sky or the gold colors of the vega. And I suppose that that meant all the while a woman! So do I now suppose—with all the same feelings and fervor of my beloved visions; and if your feelings have to be hurt, I do not care! Out of my money, which you positively know I have cleanly summed up out of years and years of not getting drunk and of not seeking ladies of sympathy, I have bought this woman. You see, yourself, the money there in the hole Amarillis has dug in the green. And you see, yourself, she is mine, knocked down to me in public by your own townswoman whose judgment you favor and elect before all others! And in face of all teachings, I have, moreover, special rights in the matter, Padre Pedro, for I tell to you that which I have not told to her, now, as in confessional, for the time is short, lest you raise your arm or some command against me, that I love this woman, and neither you nor any force on earth can give me my money back!"

Upon his last words, an involuntary cry, of a timbre totally new on the taut-pitched strings of her voice, came from the woman, whose astonishment, when it had passed sharply by the chiseled lines of her mouth, left their tinted lips parted, her eyes riveted on the blanched face of the peasant; and the desperately calm priest, catching her thus surprised, unaware, as swiftly as he had caught her in his village, rushed his words in upon her.

"You are not quite insane, if the word 'love' can silence you! Granting you that, then, whatever your extremity, you are wicked in it! I will joyfully help you, once you have told me why you have fetched your evil to my town!"

"I am not evil!" she cried, blazing her voice and her whole person toward him. "Nor need I tell you anything,

save to help myself! Now that that money lies there in the dirt, this man here is the only human thing to which I am answerable—yes, human or godly, for he is God to me! First owner, by those gold pieces, now God, by that golden word! But, to put you in the niche of the matter, where you belong, I will tell you gladly what the whole world from this hour might freely know, that my husband has not married me, but owned me. He has never struck me, yet he has pounded my life out. I have slaved and adored and obeyed, and had 'Give me more' for it; I have borne him no children to forget him in, and so have tried to make up for it, doing all his biddings.

"But you know it all! You are a priest and, from countless women, you know it word for word! They are dull items, anyway, and when all is done, it was that looking across the table, exactly one thousand and ninety-five times a year—minus the times he ate with other women and gave me worse meals by recounting it! How did he dare that, by the way? He has described their gayety to my solemn face! He has laughed at the very tears I have shed into the food he ridiculed. Such is marriage, and I had bargained for it. Well, I bargain for something opposite, now! Good God! But I will love you, Benito, as you have chanced to ask for it! But, bumping my head on the floor will be done as cheerfully, and as well, remember that, and remember, too, love will take a little while, a few hours of liberty! I have run a long way, and I am very tired! I—I must close my eyes tight for one instant between history and history."

She swayed backward, and the trembling peasant toward her.

"I tell you, keep them open yet for a little! You have a little journey yet to go!"

"I obey you. I will!" she cried. And, clenching her hands, she widened

the big, brown eyes at him, and smiled. But the priest's voice, thunderous, rolled over them, the black shadow of his outraged presence fled toward them.

"Where are you going? What are you doing?"

Benito faced him.

"I am going to take her down into the chasm, where I live. She is my property, and I have a right to put her in my house. And into my cupboard, too, if I like, where my money came out of!"

"Benito!" cried the tortured father, tremblingly, solemnly. "Benito! And you, whose name I do not know——"

"Beatriz!" she laughed.

"Benito and Beatriz, you would be going farther, farther down than that gloomy chasm! Do you understand now? Oh, Christ, do they understand?" And his great arms rose.

And so utter was his giving of himself in his appeal to Heaven, that they might have stopped there, forgotten in the sunlight, but that the woman's own hands sprang at them and wrenched them passionately down and flung them to his sides.

"Yes, every thought upon this in your priest's brain, I understand to the marrow, yet I stand here, defiant and confident, on my own thoughts and feelings! I have been the slave of a sacrament, and now I am the slave of honest living!"

"Alas, I would like to love you!" moaned the priest, "but I confess it, you are horrible to me! God will answer this, but, for the moment, you have struck me blind. I pity you, and I cannot order my town, whose horror surrounds you, to knock you down, as my once-loved son called it, and carry you to food and sleep and kindness!"

"I am horrible to you," she hurled at him, "because I have denounced the religion-iced world that I, a simple Catalan woman, was forced into! I am disgusting to you not because I

am the evil you have called me, but simply because I hate everything you love!"

"I love God!" cried the padre desolately.

"Stop mammocking my words!" she commanded. "Is God worldly? I meant everything worldly that you love, and you knew it—marriage is worldly according to the Book, for instance! Words shall not stop me to-day, take my word for that! I have had words for five years with my husband!"

"Come you," said Benito, stepping toward her again. "Stop hurting his feelings, for I love him. Come you now!"

Again reverberant thunder sounded in the padre's voice, and again he was toward them, almost upon them.

"I have bodily strength, as well as God's, in my make-up, and you do not stir from this spot, both nor one nor other, without my sanction! Failing my own frame of poor dust, these aghast people about you will, at my single syllable or gesture, stand between you two—meaning you two and villainy—between me and disgrace to the town God gave to me!"

And a murmur, the first break, after many minutes, of the long, tense, public silence, went up all about the loved priest, and hummed all through the square.

"Benito!" she cried, trembling in the sting of it, but daring the people with her eyes. "Have you ever been to the theater? See the harsh rôle of the church there!" And she laughed.

"Let her rave!" cried the padre. "Pity her, do not condemn her! Let her rave, poor thing, and she will exhaust herself presently!"

"That may be!" she laughed. "But first, Benito, I swear to you, we will have our drama out!"

He did not answer her. Since the priest's invective and the rustling response to it of their townfolk, he had gazed from face to face of them, on around to the priest's, to the woman's,

his cheeks growing whiter and whiter, to the very edges of his stubborn lips, through which his breath came in short, audible flutters. They were cheeks markedly different from the woman's, as they bent near, nearer toward hers, over the shadowed money, for into what had seemed to the gazing folk the actual hollows of her face had come the intense pink of swiftly living, vital, self-satisfying existence.

To the gaudily dressed, crowded villagers, who now felt themselves made helpless parts of their peasant melodrama, against the generality of circular sky, with the one great, austere detail of the fonda vestibulo and its huge, black, columned shadows, the pair looked like stiffly postured marionettes, ready, at a signal, to clash together on their iron rods. But they seemed manikins, most of all, in their visages, thus poised at each other across the forgotten money—hers, bright white with its two rose-rouge spots and brown, gold-spotted eyes; his, white entirely, ghastly, with its two lonely light eyes of china blue.

"No, Beatriz," he said very clearly, though his words came from between deep gasps, "I have been never to the theater, but we will go there now, whatever you mean by it, right into my own little house!"

"We will go anywhere!" she cried, her voice musical in its determined cadences. "As long as you give me the order, we will go to the end of the earth! I confess to you, I fear this cathedral of a man! He could readily drive me from town; he might drive you! I would go there, to the very edge of the world, either to meet you joyously, after the journey, as a lover, or to meet your rage there for the trouble I have got you into, in terror, but uncomplainingly, for you to topple me off!"

"I do not want you to topple!" said Benito. "I have been wanting to pre-

vent it, and would yet do so but for the town and for the padre! I do not want you to bang your poor brains on the floor!"

"And what *do* you want!" she cried. "In this grip of priest and people upon us, what do you want immediately? Being honest, I must prove my value to you! Is it actually love that you want, want from me? Can such a miracle exist? I will give it to you, right here as we are, in the palm of their priestly, village hand, if you tell me to! I will shout it at you, anyway, for being yours, head and foot, north and south, all around—like a bun to eat, or only taste, or throw away—my love cannot come amiss, and here it is! All, first, the thoughts of marriage that I had before I married; and all, second, the unfulfillment of them, for you to fulfill, or to beat the beauty out of, as you choose; and all, third, of the smile, over the stale food of other women's feasts, that I denied my husband—a smile for you, Benito, that has no bitterness in it, for you have paid for me!"

"And I take it, smile and virgin thoughts and all!" he breathed, bending as near as he dared to her. "I want it, and I take it!"

"I will hear no more!" cried Padre Pedro wildly. "I do not abandon you, but I will hear no more! You are horrible! I turn my back!" And the big, weeping prelate did so, his elbows knocking aside two of his loved people, his clasped hands torturing their way to his chin.

"Yes, I take it," repeated Benito, shivering, "for it is my right to! There is the money between us, straight under the padre's heel! And though he might grind it out of sight into the ground, he cannot grind down what has led me to this matter, the visions that have kept me pious and a fit comrade for children! No, there cannot be

taken from me my visions by Padre Pedro, nor Terassa."

"You told me not to close my eyes, Benito," she gasped, "and I did not, and I do not need to, now! Wonderful, innocent, childlike man, I give you every knot of ribbon, white and blue, red and yellow, that I ever laid under my pillow in my girlhood nights! Will you take for them looks and reachings of my fingers? Will you remember that the brain that retains them may be beaten on the floor?"

In sobs strung to the undulations of her reckless voice, a number of Terassan women were weeping, and in exact and equally sharp sympathy of tune, Rosa's finger was tattooing her shoulder.

Amid the gold-shimmered, rich pink of the vineyards and their alternating golden-greens, a gray, zigzag thing, like a wrong thread in homespun, was making its way, striking the right wall, and the left, and again and again, up the yellow highway.

He was not drunk—unless with rage or exhaustion—he was too fast for that.

"Yes, Brier, yes, that is my husband!" gasped the woman, and she stopped her words with a ghastly laugh, and, turning its fascinated faces from her face and its ears backward to Benito's half-audible cry, almost all of crowding Terassa switched wholly about and gazed down into the highway.

And at further approach of the horrible figure, constantly nearer to them, though by instant and instant it struck itself, at the end of a straight line, with all its dreaded significance against wall and wall, the two passionate figures on the golden-edged corner of the green seemed to wilt, melt, before his presence, as ironically terrible and helpless, with all their facial colors and bodily stiffness, as wax figures in a fire.

But his fierce shadow was blotted

out, for an instant, by the padre's bigger one.

"Sit down!" he cried sharply. "Crouch down, you two wicked people! He has not yet seen you! Close in, close in around them!"

And the excited, obedient Terassans, as the two quaked into the grass and money and risen dust and flecks of neat gravel, did their priest's bidding.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" the man was crying, and, as the oval-shaped, moaning syllables issued from his mouth, his elbows were knocking aside a Terassan and a Terassan and a Terassan. "A priest! A priest! Is there a priest in town?"

"I am a priest, I hope," said Padre Pedro, stepping quietly toward him.

The man staggered forward, seized his shoulders with enormous, shaking hands.

"My wife, my own wife!" he shouted, his words ringing separately out between raging sobs. "My wife! My own wife, mine, mine, my property! Mine, mine!"

In great height and in splendor of figure, in dull blackness of hair, beard, and smutted eyebrows, and in rich, almost ruby red of olive cheeks, he was devilish, if not the devil; while in big, pitiable, darting eyes and uncontrollable lips, one red and one redder, but white marked from biting, he was angelic, a thing to take care of.

"She has quit me, to sell herself and my name, in public, leaving a loud message to that effect behind! I swear the truth of this! What must I do? I need thee, priest! These hands that pat thee must kill her! Must I be absolved before, or afterward? I have never killed any one, so I do not know! And where must I look for her? Where do such demon women go, before going to hell? You are a priest, with all knowledge for poor churchmen!"

The padre's hands had met, yielded to, and returned his frenzied grip.

"Advise me, and set me on my righteous track, for has ever such outrage before this day been done to human man?"

"Have you *been* a human man to her?" inquired the padre. "Before I give my sanction to her slaughter, you must tell me that, and all the rights of the matter. Have you been kind and patient and lamblike to her?"

"I am no saint. I set no store by my sanctities!" sobbed the man. "I have not been always soft with her, I confess it! But I have never hit her! And she had me no children to enchain my respect, so must a man not, then, take it out of her somehow?"

"Again, and as your priest," said the padre, "for I would seem to be yours, from your grip of me, I command you to tell me, and before these people, as you have seized me before them, have you been a deserving husband?"

"My marriage was a cheat!" roared the fellow in a horrifying outburst, his voice shaking his great body, his hands shaking the great prelate. "She was not like the pretty frocks she wore as a virgin, nor like her swinging gait in them! And I, so full of life, had to sit down at table, year end to year end, with this lonesome woman! And women, if you do not forever try to please them, if you do not forever either entirely love them or entirely abstain from them, are such devils! But, such as she is, she is mine, despite her runaway—mine, mine by the holy sacrament of the church! According to it, we are one and indivisible, and if, perhaps, I have taken too great a part, she should have been devilish sooner! It is not fair that I should have to suffer this insult suddenly! I am a clever man, in both work and women, yet all of my wits are gone by it! I am lost utterly! But, none of that matters. Here is the evil point: she has fled me, with the neighbors knowing all her plot, and she must not consum-

mate it! You are a priest, you! What must I do?"

"You must come with me," said the padre, "to my house, where we can talk together quietly. It is almost directly here, in the Chasm Road. I have been myself away. You may help me open the shutters."

"No, no!" cried the man. "If you have not seen her and will not instantly advise me, I must on, on! There is no time for shutters! I did not even stop to close my own! I must on, on!"

"Then, go!" said the padre, catching his breath, but unfortunately catching back his hands as well.

"You repudiate me?" cried the big man wildly. "I would go cursing because you would not advise me! Oh, oh, as there has never been so conditioned a husband, what does such a husband do? If you will not tell me, I will ask your townsfolk! I will seize them one by one, for my hands are strong, and ask the first and the last of them what to do! I have seen in their faces they are breathless at my story, and would let me plow through them till I found an answer!"

"My friend!" cried the padre quickly. "The good God has put it into my priest's knowledge, that your unhappy wife has not yet fulfilled her purpose! You came here crying for a priest, and has it not been good of God to tell me? Had I not come home in the moment when I did, just before you, you might never have had this message! And I promise you, in the names of all these people, that if you will go quietly with me to my house for counsel, no evil, during our interval, will go forward in this my town and theirs—nor anywhere else in Spain, if prayers can stop it! And so, all may be well!"

"You promise it?" cried the man, his voice rising. "As a priest, you dare promise that?"

"I dare!" cried the padre.

"He dare not!" cried a voice more

loudly, over the heads of the people, higher pitched than the man's, more clarion than the priest's. "Or if he dare, he is a fool, Estéban! The evil, if it is evil, is done!"

"Oh, my Father, my Father!" choked the padre, as the curtain of people, as if rent open by her slashing voice, parted and disclosed her, and all the crude expression of its stiff pattern of staring human figures seemed to be wiped from it into one great gape in her husband's gazing face.

"No, you priest, no!" she laughed madly. "Ah, no! Your churchly thoughts of this are far worse, after all, than my deed, you see? But I have kissed him, Estéban, know you that! Not on the lips, but, though this terrified old woman, who first egged me on, has been holding my mouth back through my wrists, and the men him, we have leaned near enough for the taste of breath! Well, am I a lonesome woman now, Estéban, as you look at me across the money? There it is, Estéban! Do you see it? The sale has been made!"

"Benito, I told you we would have our drama out, and we will! It is only eight hundred pesetas and some, Estéban, and by a long year's figuring I have cost you nearly nine hundred. But in your wooing, you bragged to me of the great price of my wedding ring—a hundred pestas, you liar! And now, at last, I make you honest. Now you pay that price!"

And with a wrench of her hands and a diagonal gleam of sunshine, a bit of gold clinkingly joined the coins in the grassy dirt.

"Oh! Oh!" breathed Estéban. "Oh!" And bent-shouldered, his great arms flung across his head, he turned away, as the priest at first had done. "Oh!"

It was his only word, only sound, made longer and longer in its loud-repetitions—more sound than word, with

all its rage disseminated into searching, vitiating pain.

Not only was it Estéban's only sound, but the only sound in town, until, after a long, motionless interval, Benito stirred in the crowd.

"Poor Beatriz! I meant it when I said I loved you! This is a strange matter, but it is all accomplished. The people are no longer holding us. Come you now to my house!"

But the woman did not answer him.

She was staring across the money, straight ahead of her, and her upright posture, stiffer than any other in the scene, with her arms sharply at her sides and her thin shoulders thrown rigidly back, gave her a startling military look.

Even the padre's voice, full of swift, angry words for Benito, dried in his throat and died there as he gazed at her.

With the high color suddenly gone from her face, she was yet more like a marionette than ever, a crude, dully painted soldier, and with the low moaning of her husband as an accompaniment, the brilliant, emotional light was fading, fading in her eyes, as if it were her militant fate marching, in retreat, across the desolate battlefields of her past life.

As the moan of the husband and the light of the wife's eyes trailed away together she said abruptly:

"Benito, I am a bad actress! I fail the drama!" And, like a puppet clashing limply from the stage into the audience, she staggered across the money toward Estéban.

"Nothing on earth must suffer so! No human thing must agonize like that—except me, who was built for it! Estéban, Estéban! Take me home, if you like! Do what you like with me hereafter! I do not fear your wrath bodily! I see it is impotent! I do not love my husband, priest, I swear that! But—oh, I have turned sick! I have turned

always sick at the bullfight, God pity and witness me!"

"So!" cried Estéban, his voice moaning and raging again, his hands both reaching at her. "You liken me to a stuck bull, you, who drove me forth into the arena? But I will take you back! You have told your tale, anyway. This whole town thinks it has seen you strip me naked, but I will take you back!"

"Keep your hands off her!"

The mad voice was Benito, Benito's the grotesque and awful figure, with legs planted, with distended fingers up.

"You *bruja*, there is the money, and here are you, and here am I! And there is he! Hurl him over, Terassa, into the money pit! I gave you no orders while the padre was gone, so I order you now! The two belong together, and that is the coupling for to-day—the two *theres*, the two *heres*!"

"This will pass, Benito! This will be a dream to you!" she shrieked.

"Woman, 'I have looked upon you,' as the Bible says!" he raged. "And the harm is done, as you have said—but it is done to *me*! I woke up this morning a good, pious man, with an eternity of bliss before me, and when I sleep to-night, it will be condemned to death and to unending punishment! Well, for doing this to me you shall suffer the death part, anyway, and I may even see you down there, as the padre said, instead of just down in the chasm, in my pretty house! As soon as I looked upon you, I knew you were meant by fate and my character to send me to the devil if you chose! And since you have chosen, I shall go there—but I shall go for a reason! Because I shall deserve to go! You are mine, so look in my eyes, you demon! He has not killed you, but I will!"

Estéban, almost as if for Benito's bidding, had been seized; and so had they two, again, she by one strong old

woman, he by strong young men; and the padre had been swirled helpless to one side by the drama that had begun without him and whose renewed violence had wrested its action from his hands. He was praying frantically in the thick of the swarm.

"She is mine!" screamed Estéban.

"Mine! Mine!" screamed Benito.

But, louder than either of theirs, climbed Rosa's voice.

"Stop her! Stop her! Oh, God, forgive me! This will be worse than I supposed it could be!"

She had torn herself loose from the torn curtain of people and was racing like a fragment of fabric down the wind.

"It was myself I sold to the devil! No decent man shall go to hell for me!"

With the cry trumpeting over her shoulder, she was like a valkyrie bearing her own killed soul, thrown athwart the haunches of her winged horse, to heaven—as if, though she fled squarely around the graveled corner, she had cut straight across it into the Chasm Road.

She was almost instantly a hundred feet from the foremost of them, and though she kept hurling her words back, and seemed sometimes to face them, she went on, on, on, on.

"Benito, listen to me! I told you this would be but a bad dream! It will! You woke up a good man this morning, Benito. You will be a better man to-morrow!"

He did not listen. He was neck by neck with Estéban, ahead of the pouring crowd, spitting syllables at him as the big man spit back, so that their voices were like one strangling voice as they ran:

"She is mine! She is mine! Mine! Mine! Mine!"

They had gained from the crowd, but she, still, from them. She stopped, turned swiftly, erect, her shadow a straight, black line in the bright glare

of the padre's white, green-shuttered house.

Her words rang sharply out, sharp as the ringing laugh that interlarded them.

"Well, well, I have lived, anyway! If I have not lived to have children, at least I have lived to make two grown men unhappy! I told you, Terassa, I had wares to sell, and I had wares under my gown that all your wealth could not have bought from me! Not soap, Terassa, hardware! Estéban, I had some money that you did not know of! Estéban, I have owned it since a month of nights after our wedding day!"

Her dark shadow fled under her, then lay quietly beside her, before the unopened eyes of the padre's house.

But the bright, gray glint in their faces, the sharp vibrance in the air, had not silenced the two headlong men, and even now that they had halted, they were still shouting fiercely at each other over the smoking picture.

"She is mine!"

"Mine!"

"Alas, alas, she is God's!" sobbed the padre bitterly, crumpling with this strange sentence down into the dust of the religious Chasm Road.



ADVICE is seldom welcome; and those who want it the most always like it the least.—*Lord Chesterfield*.



GOOD advice is one of those injuries which a good man ought, if possible, to forgive, but at all events to forget as soon as possible.—*Horace Smith*.



'Tis sweet to feel by what fine-spun threads our affections are drawn together.—*Laurence Sterne*.



FOR the affection of young ladies is of as rapid growth as Jack's beanstalk, and reaches up to the sky in a night.—*William Makepeace Thackeray*.



NEVER teach false morality. How exquisitely absurd to tell girls that beauty is of no value, dress is of no use. Beauty is of value, her whole prospects and happiness in life may often depend on a new gown or a becoming bonnet, and if she has five grains of sense she will find this out.—*Sydney Smith*.



I DON'T feel the slightest respect for any man whatever, be it the king himself. I think women are worth much more than men, even the most distinguished men.—*Honoré de Balzac*.

by
Robert Davis



Again, in a Stable

AT the close of a wet day a half-grown boy in a man's coat was pushing a barrow over the cobbled road which enters Morliet-le-Petit. At his heels paced an old bitch of the Normandy shepherd race. Upon his barrow was a basket of grass, cut near a south-exposed fountain on the hill, where, although the date was the twenty-fourth of December, the verdure had retained the color and succulence of summer. As the road issued from a grove of birch and linden, the eighteen dwellings which compose Morliet-le-Petit lay under the boy's eyes—a double row of houses terminated by the gray and roofless walls of a church. On the farther edge of the church inclosure wound an uneven barrier of poplars and willow brush, under which flowed the waters of the Matz, muddied and swollen by three day's rain. Midway in the short line of roofs was a single, unbroken square of tiling, the home of Le Duc, the miser,

lucky in peace and lucky no less in the vagaries of war.

As the boy descended to the lower level, where diverge the roads for Resson and Lassigny, there is a Calvary in a quadrangle of plane trees. The timbers of the cross stood firmly upon their brick base, but the effigy of the Christ, marred in the iron rain of an éclatment, had fallen from its position, leaving the dissevered left hand impaled upon the nail. The body had been permitted to remain where it fell, looking up at the sky, at the cross, at the spear-headed nail in the hand. A clematis vine, using the cross as its support, had climbed to the crossbar, from which, in this winter season, the seed pods were pendent in the air, like buttons of gray rabbit fur. In front of the crucifix, the boy set down the handles of his barrow to rest his shoulders and to survey the tripartite road for travelers. His serious and brilliant eyes turned inquiringly upon the cross and upon the pros-

trate figure looking into the sky. "His day of birth, to-morrow," he repeated thoughtfully.

A hundred meters farther, and just outside the boundary of the village, the boy set down his barrow again. Across the ditch was an unused sheep shelter, the roof of which, collapsing inward, rested upon the ground in damp decay. The boy entered through a shell hole in the eroding wall and began to pull strips from the ribs of the fallen roof, breaking them over his knee into firewood lengths. He worked with capable, assured movements, pausing to turn back the sleeves of the man's coat from his hands. Once he listened, when the staccato blows of a hammer announced that a carpenter was occupied at his trade. "Jean Levert repairs the window of the barrack," he murmured in answer to his own question.

Pursuing his downhill route from Tilley, the mail carrier approached Morliet-le-Petit, his red-braided cap drawn over his eyes against the wind, his blue cape wrapping about his thighs. He studied the barrow from the distance and sent a cheerful hail toward the sheep shelter.

"Is it thee, Jeannot Cabaille, who breaks the sticks? Behold, a letter from Amiens." The postman was already opening the leather box suspended from his shoulder. "And make haste, for it is fifty letters that I have to deliver this day, and it is but a little moment that I can stop to read for thee."

In the region of the Oise the postman combines the duties of delivering the mail and of deciphering it for the peasants, and is, for good measure, the channel of essential news from village to village. Wiping his earthy hands upon his breeches, the boy jumped the ditch and received the letter.

"Yes, for thee and from the mother, Therese, is it not so? Quick and open it, for it is five kilometers that I make before dark," warned the postman,

swinging his box back upon his hip. "Shall I read it, or shall I not?" Marcel Thénard was vain of his learning and loved to roll the written word like a bonbon upon his tongue. The boy returned the letter and the man read:

"My son, Jeannot, the pain in my breast is departing, and the *médecin chef* of the clinic says that I shall return for the fête of the New Year, but not for the fête of Christmas. Upon you, my Jeannot, is the responsibility of making the fête for the little ones. I am sad that I cannot sit with my children upon the Christmas, the first on returning to Morliet. My thoughts are of the last Christmas in Morliet, when we were six united, when papa was on his permission and brought the chocolate sabots. The locket he brought his wife is reposing on my heart. It is the fête for us to be happy in one another's presence and to forgive one's enemies. In each other, and in our brave memories, we have enough to be happy. In the corner of my box one will find the head for a doll for Ginette; the knitted stockings are for you and Bibiche, but you will make something pretty besides for Bibiche, is it not so? The young rabbits must be taken from the black doe. If you permit the goats to graze, the kid shall be tied in the court, else the old ones will stray. The buck with the white foot you may eat for the dinner of Noël. My children, my love is with you each moment. Therese."

The postman smacked his lips, refolding the paper. "Stew of rabbit for the dinner, and the mother cured of the pain in her breast! An excellent letter, is it not? A magic task that my staff and I perform, my Jeannot, among the people of the valley of the Matz, carrying the black box of words. Little marks upon white paper, the words that make the hearts to weep and to sing. Bonjour, the darkness will soon be here, but it is the amiable darkness

of Christmas night." The man and the boy touched their left hands, and the postman's staff tapped off downhill.

The boy finished breaking his load of sticks, and descended the remainder of the incline into the village. At the third house on the right he guided his barrow through the wall of a building, following a path that had been cleared through the blasted masonry. The litter of stone and brick, within and without the dwelling, was softened by the green charity of moss and weeds. At the rear of the house he crossed a farm court to a brick shed, once used for the storage of farm utensils and grain and as sleeping quarters for a plowman, but now the home of the Cabaille family. The roof of the shed was of impermeable paper and the window of oiled cloth. Adjoining the shed, and covered by the prolongation of the same paper roof, was a stable, where fowls roosted and the goats were tethered. Into the front wall of the stable, rabbit hutches of brick had been built, like the compartments of an office desk.

The boy added his wood to the pile that was drying under a shelf of corrugated iron, threw some handfuls of fresh grass to the goats and rabbits, and passed into the dwelling to kindle a fire. Fidèle, the gray bitch at his heels, shook her wet coat on entering the doorway. A shallow fireplace, surmounted by a stone shelf, occupied the farther wall of the shed. A wood-burning stove stood before the window, its pipe escaping through a sheet of zinc in the roof. Along the rear wall were two beds and two wicker trunks, in the center of the room a table with benches about it. Upon the stone ledge over the hearth was a clock and the photograph of a man, with a *croix de guerre* fastened upon the frame.

The boy created fire, lifted the pot of cold stew from the floor to the stove, brought a pitcher of water from the cistern and rinsed the crockery upon the

table, smoothed the coverings upon the beds, swept the stone floor with a fagot of twigs bound to a stick by wire. Like disciplined servants, his hands worked with unhesitating gestures, while the whole energy of his mind was directed upon inward matters. The eve of Père Noel was come, and he was responsible for the fête.

The duties in the house done, the boy held his ear to the doorway of the stable to satisfy himself that the goats and rabbits were eating quietly, and returned to the road to await the children, who at this hour should be arriving from the school at Conchy-les-Pots. He walked the brief length of the Morliet street, and stood upon the bridge, his eyes on the slipping yellow water, his mind possessed by the plans of a serious boy who is, in himself, father, mother, and Père Noel on Christmas Eve.

It was half past four and growing dusk when Jeannot heard the clack-clack of wooden soles upon the cobbles. A moment later he caught the sibilant voice of a little girl. The two small figures, in their school aprons of black sateen, saw Jeannot and quickened their steps. Ginette, of seven years, with spun-sugar hair, was whiter and of a more slender mold than her brothers. Bibiche, the brother of five, prudently wound to the ears in a muffler, with the owlish visage that fleshy little boys often wear, was flushed as the result of being pulled three kilometers at an unnatural speed.

"It is thee, Jeannot?" the light voice of the little girl called, "Did thee know that it is the night when Père Noel comes to the chimneys and the Holy Child blesses the houses? At Resson-sur-Matz is a manger in the church, with sheep and a donkey. Dost thou think that Père Noel will find the road to Morliet-le-Petit?" She uttered it all in one breath, and, having imparted the news once with success, repeated it

all with the second breath. Fidèle, with a quick bound, licked Bibiche's cheek, and, with another bound, was out of reach before the hand of the insulted little boy could slap her. Jeannot kissed the children, and the three went hand-in-hand to their home. Brown and brilliant eyes were the inheritance of all three.

Night had fallen quickly, and with it the slow drip of the rain recommenced. Jeannot lighted the lamp, fed the fire, and seated himself beside the stove, with the great golden ring of bread under his arm, from which he cut crumbs into the leek-and-potato soup. The children cleaned the mud from their wooden-soled leather shoes and placed them before the chimney. Bibiche, pondering the solemn mystery of Père Noel, walked into the fireplace and peered aloft.

"Oh, it is nice to be home, it is nice to be home for Christmas," sang Ginette, "for when we were refugees in the South we did not have a visit from Père Noel. They did not have intelligence in the South. Oh, it is nice to be in our own country for Noel!" As he stirred the supper, Jeannot related the contents of Therese's letter, and the little girl, setting the bowls and spoons properly upon the table, and wiping the sticky aureole from Bibiche's mouth with a damp cloth, changed the text of her chant, "Oh, in seven days mamma will be home! Oh, in seven days mamma will be home!"

Bibiche and Fidèle eyed the bubbling soup steadily. The horn of a merchant's cart sounded from the street, a sound for which Jeannot had been listening. It was the signal of the peddler who drove through Morliet-le-Petit on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Jeannot bade Ginette mind the pot, took the bag of pennies from behind the clock, and hurried across the court. Presently he returned, with his hand inside his coat, and deposited

something upon the garments inside the wicker trunk. The soup was lifted upon the table, where Bibiche had already seated himself, spoon in hand.

A half hour later Ginette and Bibiche, their outer garments removed, were in bed. Every stir of the beasts in the other end of the shed, every rustle of wind in the yard, brought them bolt upright, that they might not miss a glimpse of the half-dreaded, half-adored figure of Père Noel. After various unprofitable alarms, Bibiche kept his round eyes on the sabots beside the chimney. Jeannot, whose evening work was delayed by the wakefulness of the children, drew his bench to the bed and hummed the rondel with which the mothers of Picardy have put their babies to sleep for centuries:

*"Dors, ma chiot Quinquin,
Dors, ma chiot Pouchin,
Dors, ma chiot Rouquin."*

*"Sleep, my little spoiled child,
Sleep, my little pet chick,
Sleep, my little redhead."*

The slow dropping of the rain on the paper roof, the smooth breathing of the wind, the measured drip from a leak on the stone floor, the caressing undulation of the boy's tone and body, were too soothing for the tired little brother's and sister's resolution, and they floated away to the land where the improbabilities of the day are fulfilled in the dreams of the night.

At once Jeannot was all action. From the smaller trunk he brought forth the doll's head and set to whittling a body which should fit into the neck. But his knife was dull and his wood was wet. On impulse, he rewrapped the head, closed his knife, and went to the doorway. Through the openings of the decrepit buildings he could see the light in the shed occupied by Herman, the prisoner who labored for the widow Casenave. When not wheeling bricks or chopping wood, this Herman was forever whittling or writ-

ing dull notes upon wheat and weather in his diary.

Holding his coat about his hips, Jeannot ran toward the light of the prisoner's oiled-paper window. The German was bending over his fire, his knife paring a block of wood, and his eyes far away—four hundred kilometers away, had Jeannot known it. He opened his lips in a slow smile when Jeannot, chiefly by gestures, explained his errand, and for reply reached down a billet of pine that was drying upon the stovepipe. As he began to chip the corners from the wood Jeannot left him. His pale eyes were retreating to their far vision, but his smile remained. Jeannot ran home, seized the lamp, and entered the stable. In a corner was a box of odd pieces of harness, in which he discovered a long strap, two bridle rosettes, a short, thick leather, a buckle, and a sleigh bell. Back beside the stove he went to work with copper wire, grease, and knife. To the short strip he affixed the two rosettes, rubbed bright with sand, with the bell between. The long strap was wired to it in a double loop, and the reins for Bibiche were complete.

Jeannot killed the rabbit by a smart stroke behind the ears with the edge of his hand, peeled off the pelt while the body was warm, and hung the dinner above his bed, secure from cats and dogs. Walking fast, he went to the edge of the settlement, where he had marked an apple tree in the afternoon, an untrimmed tree that was starving itself by the support of many clusters of mistletoe. Two symmetrical clusters, the position of which he had memorized, he broke from the limbs and carried home, where he tied them over the doorway and the table. Through an aura of mist he saw that the light still burned in Herman's shed, and he went to inquire for the doll. The body, with arms and legs, was neatly fitted into the neck and ready. The man and boy

wrapped the stiff body in a handkerchief, tied with a ribbon, judging that Ginette would prefer to do the dress-making for her wooden child. As he was leaving the prisoner's shed Jeannot laid the knitted stockings upon the table, the stockings which he had found in Therese's box, saying, "Good wishes, Herman."

Last of all, he brought from the wicker trunk the two spice cakes, baked in the form of the Holy Child, with a halo of white frosting, which he had bought from the peddler, and placed one cake and the doll in Ginette's sabots and the other cake and the reins in Bibiche's. Fidèle stretched herself behind the stove and the boy lay down to sleep. His thoughts were of Therese's letter: "It is the fête to be happy in each other and to forgive our enemies; we have enough to be happy in each other's presence and in our brave memories." Jeannot throbbed with strange happiness as he fell asleep. He was in his fourteenth year, this boy, that most mysterious of all the years that a man can live.

When the Cabaille family awoke on Christmas morning the rain was still falling. Jeannot milked the goat and made coffee while the children sat in bed, holding their sabots and pelting him with questions:

"Did you see him, Jeannot?"

"Didn't you hear a scratching sound?"

"Well, why didn't Fidèle bark?" To all the questions Jeannot shook his head, except to one.

"Do you think that the Holy Child has blessed our house?"

"Yes, I feel sure that He has."

The priest from Conchy-les-Pots was coming to say mass at ten o'clock in the gable of the Droumont barn, where the roof was still sound. The devout man tramped through the ugly weather without a greatcoat, with the articles for the worship in his hands. He made

an altar of ammunition cases, covering them with a white cloth, on which were set the candlesticks, the crucifix, the chalice, and the scriptures. The undraped front of the altar showed the horizon-blue, the yellow, the blue and other painting of the boxes, the color indicating what type of shell they had contained before they had become an altar. In the dim barn the candles gave just enough light for the communicants to recognize one another. Of the eighteen inhabitants of Morliet-le-Petit fourteen were present at mass, sitting upon other ammunition cases. Three Belgian masons, who were restoring the bridges, came forward reverently, laid their caps on the damp ground, kneeled upon them, and prayed. As they knelt the light from the candles shone on the nails in the upturned soles of their boots. In the rear of the worshipers André Droumont, the freethinker stood apart, holding his little boy with the tuberculous hip in his burly arms. Jeannot led his two children to a box beside Madame Morlière, who placed her arm around Bibiche. When the old priest put on the white robe of his office his mild voice became invested with a timbre of authority. He forgot the dingy barn and the roofless church, the makeshift altar, the handful who remained of his parish. He epitomized the urgency of all praying mankind, he prayed what the millions had believed, for what was to him most dear, "*Pour Nos Soldats Morts:*"

"De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine.

"Donnez-leur, Seigneur, le repos éternel.

Et, que la lumière éternelle les éclaire.
Qu'ils reposent en paix. Ainsi soit-il."

It was the silence of savagely grieving hearts when the priest finished his prayer for the lost men of Morliet-le-Petit. Not a child wished to break the spell, by movement or by sound. The little congregation sat for a long time in the light of the four candles, with the measured dropping of water about

them, their hearts turned inward, backward, upward. Jeannot, each arm around a child, sat until the neighbors had left the barn, until the curé was putting away the candlesticks. The boy's eyes had never been so living and so brilliant. He was not repeating Therese's letter; he was obeying it, he was *being* it. "It is the fête to be happy in one another and in our brave memories." The three children, holding close to each other, warm with the contact of each other's bodies, did not wish to move. Fidèle, entering unnoticed, lay behind her family.

After mass, while Jeannot boiled the rabbit and cut carrots, potatoes, onions, and bread into the pot, Ginette climbed the hill in search of grand-père Simon, the shepherd, an old man who had visited the Cabaille family before they became refugees, and who housed his sheep in a thatched shed on higher ground.

"Tell grand-père that I boil the rabbit even now," Jeannot called after her as she departed. Bibiche brought wood from the courtyard to the fireplace; it was an extravagance, but they were going to have a good blaze for the Christmas dinner. Ginette had taken the doll on her search for Simon, and Bibiche wore his reins as he trotted between the yard and the fireplace. "Enough to be happy with each other and in our brave memories," repeated the boy as he watched the cooking and set the table.

At the head of the table Jeannot set the photograph from the mantel, with the croix de guerre upon it. At the foot of the table he laid Therese's letter. On one side he placed the bowls for Ginette and Simon, on the other the bowls for Bibiche and himself. In the center of the table was a bottle of cider and a bunch of the hardy chrysanthemums which still bloomed in the inclosure behind the Morliet church.

It was toward two o'clock when Simon, the shepherd, arrived. One dog

he had left with the sheep at the pen, but the other, a Labrit, with one blue and one black eye, followed him to the door and waited. Ripened with the wisdom of many years, Simon observed much and spoke little. They ate silently, smiling at one another sometimes, enjoying their food. After he had lighted his pipe, Simon sent the Labrit racing up the hill to see whether the sheep were quiet. "Not so clever as some," grumbled the shepherd; "I have to tell her what to do."

Simon drew the photograph toward him and studied the man's face. Then he smoked a pipe in silence. "You will remember him, you little ones, that man there, that André Cabaille who is gone? I will tell you of him when he was a young thing like you."

And then the thick voice of Simon, the shepherd, achieved a miracle. Mumbling his Ardenne dialect, he made a dead man come to life, for those who listened. To those three who carried the blood and the name of André Cabaille, his *croix de guerre* rose and fell upon a breathing bosom. Of the wood cutting and the plowing, of the foot racing and the wrestling, of the love making and the marriage, of the grand-père's interment and the inheritance of the land, of the rattling, echoing drum that summoned the peasants from their hills, of these things Simon, the shepherd, spoke. None saw the gray Labrit as she came and went, making three journeys to the sheep unbidden. The fire leaped with fresh color as Jeannot threw on sticks. The rain beat an ironic accompaniment upon the paper roof as the old man, his sheep confided to the care of God and to two good dogs, unlocked the hoarded souvenirs of a silent life.

As Simon fumbled with his matches there sounded a knock upon the lintel of the door. Herman, the prisoner,

standing outside, was offering through the doorway a small cradle of white wood and four whittled sheep with inky eyes.

"For the small children," he said, uncertain whether he had been overbold.

Jeannot, tense with the emotion of Simon's tales, the tales of '71 and '14, the tales of the house of Cabaille, felt the blood boil into his brain as the man stood in his doorway, offering gifts. For a poignant moment inbred hatred fought in his heart with inbred hospitality. The voice of Therese's letter spoke: "It is the fête to be happy in each other and to forgive our enemies." He feared that he was doing a weak thing, that he was being deceived, that he was even betraying his country, yet he did what he did. A compulsion outside of himself, more right, more merciful, than himself, was acting through his spirit. He accepted the toys from the prisoner's hand and said, "Will you sit by the fire with us, out of the rain?" Ginette put her doll to bed, holding the cradle tightly in her apron. Bibiche set his sheep to graze upon the table.

When darkness brought Christmas day to a close at Morliet-le-Petit, in the shed behind the third house from the end, a fire still burned. Outside the circle of firelight, his blond head thrown back against the wall, his eyes four hundred kilometers away, a knife and a half-carved sheep in his hand, sat the prisoner. A little boy, his head resting on the table, slept. A little girl rocked a cradle in the hollow of her arm, whispering in rhythm, "*Chiot quinquin, chiot pouchin, chiot rouquin.*" The shepherd, whose thick tongue had awakened the sleeping wealths of loyalty, smoked before beginning another tale. Two dogs, with pricked ears, sniffed the crack of the door. And the eyes of Jeannot Cabaille, leaning over the flames, were filled with the ranks of marching men.

Dirge for the Year

By Percy Bysshe Shelley



ORPHAN hours, the year is dead,
 Come and sigh, come and weep!
 Merry hours, smile instead,
 For the year is but asleep.
 See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
 Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
 In its coffin in the clay,
 So white Winter, that rough nurse,
 Rocks the dead-cold year to-day;
 Solemn hours! wail aloud
 For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
 The tree-swung cradle of a child,
 So the breath of these rude days
 Rocks the year:—be calm and mild,
 Trembling hours; she will arise
 With new love within her eyes.

January gray is here,
 Like a sexton by her grave;
 February bears the bier;
 March with grief doth howl and rave,
 And April weeps—but, Oh, ye hours,
 Follow with May's fairest flowers.

By
Stephen Crane



The
Upturned Face

WHAT will we do now?" said the adjutant, troubled and excited.
"Bury him," said Timothy Lean.

The two officers looked down close to their toes where lay the body of their comrade. The face was chalk-blue; gleaming eyes stared at the sky. Over the two upright figures was a windy sound of bullets, and on the top of the hill, Lean's prostrate company of Spitzbergen infantry was firing measured volleys.

"Don't you think it would be better——" began the adjutant. "We might leave him until to-morrow."

"No," said Lean, "I can't hold that post an hour longer. I've got to fall back, and we've got to bury old Bill."

"Of course," said the adjutant at once. "Your men got intrenching tools?"

Lean shouted back to his little firing line, and two men came slowly, one with a pick, one with a shovel. They stared in the direction of the Rostina sharp-

shooters. Bullets cracked near their ears. "Dig here," said Lean, gruffly. The men, thus caused to lower their glances to the turf, became hurried and frightened merely, because they could not look to see whence the bullets came. The dull beat of the pick striking the earth sounded amid the swift snap of close bullets. Presently the other private began to shovel.

"I suppose," said the adjutant, slowly, "we'd better search his clothes for things."

Lean nodded; together in curious abstraction they looked at the body. Then Lean stirred his shoulders, suddenly arousing himself. "Yes," he said, "we'd better see—what he's got." He dropped to his knees and approached his hands to the body of the dead officer. But his hands wavered over the buttons of the tunic. The first button was brick-red with drying blood, and he did not seem to dare touch it.

"Go on," said the adjutant, hoarsely.

Lean stretched his wooden hand, and his fingers fumbled blood-stained buttons. At last he arose with a ghastly face. He had gathered a watch, a whistle, a pipe, a tobacco pouch, a handkerchief, a little case of cards and papers. He looked at the adjutant. There was a silence. The adjutant was feeling that he had been a coward to make Lean do all the grizzly business.

"Well," said Lean, "that's all, I think. You have his sword and revolver."

"Yes," said the adjutant, his face working. And then he burst out in a sudden strange fury at the two privates. "Why don't you hurry up with that grave? What are you doing, anyhow?"

Even as he cried out in this passion, the two men were laboring for their lives. Ever overhead, the bullets were spitting.

The grave was finished. It was not a masterpiece—poor little shallow thing. Lean and the adjutant again looked at each other in a curious, silent communication.

Suddenly the adjutant croaked out a weird laugh. It was a terrible laugh which had its origin in that part of the mind which is first moved by the singing of the nerves. "Well," he said, humorously to Lean, "I suppose we had best tumble him in."

"Yes," said Lean. The two privates stood waiting bent over on their implements. "I suppose," said Lean, "it would be better if we laid him in ourselves."

"Yes," said the adjutant. Then apparently remembering that he had made Lean search the body, he stooped with great fortitude and took hold of the dead officer's clothing. Lean joined him. Both were particular that their fingers should not feel the corpse. They tugged away; the corpse lifted, heaved, toppled, flopped into the grave, and the two officers, straightening, looked at each other. They sighed with relief.

The adjutant said: "I suppose we

should—we should say something. Do you know the service, Tim?"

"They don't read the service until the grave is filled in," said Lean.

"Don't they?" said the adjutant, shocked that he had made the mistake. "Oh, well," he cried, suddenly, "let us—let us say something—while he can hear us."

"All right," said Lean. "Do you know the service?"

"I can't remember a line of it," said the adjutant.

Lean was extremely dubious. "I can repeat two lines out——"

"Well, do it," said the adjutant. "Go as far as you can. That's better than nothing. And—the beasts have got our range exactly."

Lean looked at his two men. "Attention!" he barked. The privates came to attention with a click, looking much aggrieved. The adjutant lowered his helmet to his knee. Lean, bare-headed, stood over the grave. The Rostina sharpshooters fired briskly.

"O, Father, our friend has sunk in the deep waters of death, but his spirit has leaped toward Thee as the bubble arises from the lips of the drowning. Perceive, we beseech, O, Father, the little flying bubble and——"

Lean, although husky and ashamed, had suffered no hesitation up to this point, but he stopped with a hopeless feeling and looked at the corpse.

The adjutant moved uneasily. "And from Thy superb heights——" he began, and then he, too, came to an end.

"And from Thy superb heights," said Lean.

The adjutant suddenly remembered a phrase in the back part of the Spitzbergen burial service, and he exploited it with the triumphant manner of a man who has recalled everything and can go on.

"Oh, God, have mercy——"

"Oh, God, have mercy——" said Lean.

"*'Mercy,'*" repeated the adjutant, in a quick failure.

"*'Mercy,'*" said Lean. And then he was moved by some violence of feeling, for he turned suddenly upon his two men and tigerishly said: "Throw the dirt in."

The fire of the Rostina sharpshooters was accurate and continuous.

One of the aggrieved pirates came forward with his shovel. He lifted his first shovel load of earth, and for a moment of inexplicable hesitation it was held poised above this corpse which, from its chalk-blue face, looked keenly out from the grave. Then the soldier emptied his shovel on—on the feet.

Timothy Lean felt as if tons had been swiftly lifted from off his forehead. He had felt that perhaps the private might empty the shovel on—on the face. It had been emptied on the feet. There was a great point gained there. The adjutant began to babble. "Well, of course—a man we've messed with all these years—impossible—you can't, you know, leave your intimate friends rotting on the field—Go on, for God's sake, and shovel, *you*."

The man with the shovel suddenly ducked, grabbed his left arm with his right and looked at his officer for orders. Lean picked the shovel from the ground. "Go to the rear," he said to the wounded man. He also addressed the other private.

"You get under cover, too. I'll—I'll finish this business."

The wounded man scrambled hastily for the top of the ridge without devoting any glances to the direction from whence the bullets came, and the other man followed at an equal pace, but he was different in that he looked back anxiously three times. This is merely the way—often—of the hit and the unhit.

Timothy Lean filled the shovel, hesitated, and then in a movement which was like a gesture of abhorrence, he flung the dirt into the grave, and as it landed it made a sound—plop. Lean suddenly paused and mopped his brow—a tired laborer.

"Perhaps we have been wrong," said the adjutant. His glance wavered stupidly. "It might have been better if we hadn't buried him just at this time. Of course, if we advance to-morrow, the body would have been—"

"Damn you," said Lean. "Shut your mouth." He was not the senior officer.

He again filled the shovel and flung in the earth—For a space, Lean worked frantically, like a man digging himself out of danger—Soon there was nothing to be seen but the chalk-blue face. Lean filled the shovel—"Good God," he cried to the adjutant, "why didn't you turn him somehow when you put him in? This—"

The adjutant understood. He was pale to the lips. "Go on, man," he cried, beseechingly, almost in a shout—Lean swung back the shovel; it went forward in a pendulum curve. When the earth landed it made a sound—plop.



By
Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch

Author of



"Noughts
and
Crosses"

OLD AESON

JUDGE between me and my guest, the Stranger within my gates, the man whom in his extremity I clothed and fed.

I remember well the time of his coming, for it happened at the end of five days and nights during which the year passed from strength to age; in the interval between the swallow's departure and the redwing's coming; when the tortoise in my garden crept into his winter quarters, and the equinox was on us, with an east wind that parched the blood in the trees, so that their leaves for once knew no gradations of red and yellow, but turned at a stroke to brown, and cracked like tinfoil.

At five o'clock in the morning of the sixth day I looked out. The wind still whistled across the sky, but now without the obstruction of any cloud. Full in front of my window Sirius flashed with a whiteness that pierced the eye. A little to the right, the whole constellation of Orion was suspended clear over a wedgelike gap in the coast, wherein

the sea could be guessed rather than seen. And, traveling yet further, the eye fell on two brilliant lights, the one set high above the other—the one steady and a fiery red, the other yellow and blazing intermittently—the one Aldebaran, the other revolving on the light-house top, fifteen miles away.

Halfway up the east, the moon, now in her last quarter and decrepit, climbed with the dawn close at her heels. And at this hour they brought in the Stranger, asking if my pleasure were to give him clothing and hospitality.

Nobody knew whence he came—except that it was from the wind and the night—seeing that he spoke in a strange tongue, moaning and making a sound like the twittering of birds in a chimney. But his journey must have been long and painful; for his legs bent under him, and he could not stand when they lifted him. So, finding it useless to question him for the time, I learned from the servants all they had to tell—namely, that they had come upon him, but a few

minutes before, lying on his face within my grounds, without staff or scrip, bare-headed, spent, and crying feebly for succor in his foreign tongue; and that in pity they had carried him in and brought him to me.

Now for the look of this man: he seemed a century old, being bald, extremely wrinkled, with wide hollows where the teeth should be, and the flesh hanging loose and flaccid on his cheek bones; and what color he had could have come only from exposure to that bitter night. But his eyes chiefly spoke of his extreme age. They were blue and deep, and filled with the wisdom of years; and when he turned them in my direction they appeared to look through me, beyond me, and back upon centuries of sorrow and the slow endurance of man, as if his immediate misfortune were but an inconsiderable item in a long list. They frightened me. Perhaps they conveyed a warning of that which I was to endure at their owner's hands. From compassion, I ordered the servants to take him to my wife, with word that I wished her to set food before him, and see that it passed his lips.

So much I did for this Stranger. Now learn how he rewarded me.

He has taken my youth from me, and the most of my substance, and the love of my wife.

From the hour when he tasted food in my house, he sat there without hint of going. Whether from design, or because age and his sufferings had really palsied him, he came back tediously to life and warmth, nor for many days professed himself able to stand erect. Meanwhile he lived on the best of our hospitality. My wife tended him, and my servants ran at his bidding; for he managed early to make them understand scraps of his language, though slow in acquiring ours—I believe out of calculation, lest some one should inquire his

business—which was a mystery—or hint at his departure. I myself often visited the room he had appropriated, and would sit for an hour watching those fathomless eyes while I tried to make head or tail of his discourse. When we were alone, my wife and I used to speculate at times on his probable profession. Was he a merchant?—an aged mariner?—a tinker, tailor, beggarman, thief? We could never decide, and he never disclosed.

Then the awakening came. I sat one day in the chair beside him, wondering as usual. I had felt heavy of late, with a soreness and languor in my bones, as if a dead weight hung continually on my shoulders, and another rested on my heart. A warmer color in the Stranger's cheek caught my attention; and I bent forward, peering under the pendulous lids. His eyes were livelier and less profound. The melancholy was passing from them as breath fades off a pane of glass. *He was growing younger.* Starting up I ran across the room, to the mirror.

There were two white hairs in my forelock; and, at the corner of either eye, half a dozen radiating lines. I was an old man.

Turning, I regarded the Stranger. He sat phlegmatic as an Indian idol; and in my fancy I felt the young blood draining from my own heart, and saw it mantling in his cheeks. Minute by minute I watched the slow miracle—the old man beautified. As buds unfold, he put on a lovely youthfulness; and, drop by drop, left me winter.

I hurried from the room, and seeking my wife, laid the case before her.

"This is a ghoul," I said, "that we harbor: he is sucking my best blood, and the household is clean bewitched." She laid aside the book in which she read, and laughed at me. Now my wife was well-looking, and her eyes were the light of my soul. Consider, then, how I felt as she laughed, taking the Stran-

ger's part against me. When I left her, it was with a new suspicion in my heart. "How shall it be," I thought, "if, after stealing my youth, he go on to take the one thing that is better?"

In my room, day by day, I brooded upon this—hating my own alteration, and fearing worse. With the Stranger there was no longer any disguise. His head blossomed in curls; white teeth filled the hollows of his mouth; the pits in his cheeks were heaped full with roses, glowing under a transparent skin. It was Æson renewed and thankless; and he sat on, devouring my substance.

Now having probed my weakness, and being satisfied that I no longer dared to turn him out, he, who had half imposed his native tongue upon us, constraining the household to a hideous jargon, the bastard growth of two languages, condescended to jerk us back rudely into our own speech once more, mastering it with a readiness that proved his former dissimulation, and using it henceforward as the sole vehicle of his wishes. On his past life he remained silent; but took occasion to confide in me that he proposed embracing a military career, as soon as he should tire of the shelter of my roof.

And I groaned in my chamber; for that which I feared had come to pass. He was making open love to my wife. And the eyes with which he looked at her, and the lips with which he coaxed her, had been mine; and I was an old man. Judge now between me and this guest.

One morning I went to my wife; for the burden was past bearing, and I must satisfy myself. I found her tending the plants on her window ledge; and when

she turned, I saw that years had not taken from her comeliness one jot. And I was old.

So I taxed her on the matter of this Stranger, saying this and that, and how I had cause to believe he loved her.

"That is beyond doubt," she answered, and smiled.

"By my head, I believe his fancy is returned!" I blurted out.

And her smile grew radiant, as, looking me in the face, she answered:

"By my soul, husband, it is."

Then I went from her, down into my garden, where the day grew hot and the flowers were beginning to droop. I stared upon them and could find no solution to the problem that worked in my heart. And then I glanced up, eastward, to the sun above the privet hedge, and saw *him* coming across the flower beds, treading them down in wantonness. He came with a light step and a smile, and I waited for him, leaning heavily on my stick.

"Give me your watch!" he called out, as he drew near.

"Why should I give you my watch?" I asked, while something worked in my throat.

"Because I wish it; because it is gold; because you are too old, and won't want it much longer."

"Take it," I cried, pulling the watch out and thrusting it into his hand. "Take it—you who have taken all that is better! Strip me, spoil me——"

A soft laugh sounded above, and I turned. My wife was looking down on us from the window, and her eyes were moist and glad.

"Pardon me," she said, "it is you who are spoiling the child."

ps

Mr. Cypress: Human love! Love is not an inhabitant of the earth. We worship him as the Athenians did their unknown God; but broken hearts are the martyrs of his faith, and the eye shall never see the form that phantasy paints, and which passion pursues through paths of delusive beauty, among flowers whose odors are agonies, and trees whose gums are poison.—*Thomas Love Peacock.*

The Foretaste



FOLLOWING the appearance of the present number, AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will cease distinct publication and will be merged with FAR WEST ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE.

The subscription lists of AINSLEE'S will be combined with those of FAR WEST. Subscribers to AINSLEE'S will accordingly receive FAR WEST at monthly intervals, commencing with the January number, until the expiration of their subscription terms.

FAR WEST is a magazine of fact and fiction concerning itself specifically with the frontiers and outposts of American life. It pictures faithfully and in vivid detail the actuality and the romance of range, mountain, and timber lands. Its articles and stories, attractively illustrated, are forceful and direct and carry the authority of writers carefully selected for their familiarity with the locales of which they treat.

The purpose of FAR WEST ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE is to reveal America to itself—to disclose to its readers those remote reaches where Americans of the pioneer strain still pit themselves against the primitive and where our multitude of mechanical aids to existence are still only known as faint, almost incredible, rumors.

A sample of what awaits the readers of FAR WEST is included in this final number of AINSLEE'S. It is the first installment of Max Brand's vigorous serial, "Comanche." When you've read it you'll be eager to finish the story. There will be four more installments running in succeeding issues of FAR WEST.

We are confident that readers of AINSLEE'S will recognize and approve

the excellence of FAR WEST. However, subscribers who so desire will be refunded the value of their unexpired subscription terms in AINSLEE'S upon application.



TOURNAMENT AWARDS

The anonymous classic published in connection with the Book Lovers' Tournament for October was taken from "The Decameron" by Giovanni Boccaccio. The title of the story, in the original version, is in effect a complete synopsis of the tale. A few meticulous book lovers quoted it in full. Others gave one or another of the briefer titles supplied by various translators. The story seems to have been most frequently labeled "The Falcon." At any rate, it is the ninth tale of the fifth day in the series of narrations set down by Boccaccio. For the purposes of the Tournament, any identification of author and title which plainly showed that the contributor had accurately located the story was accepted by the judges as adequate.

The winning letter, hereafter quoted in part, was contributed by J. Hilliard Foley, of Ottawa, Canada. The names of the ten contributors whose letters were esteemed next in order of excellence are listed following the excerpts from Mr. Foley's contribution.

FROM THE WINNING LETTER

"Let us note the introduction—trite now, but fresh enough six hundred years ago, and, moreover, expediently employed to unite the parts of the greater work itself, and therefore not to be condemned. This circuitous open-

ing immediately recalls to the reader's mind the commencements of a number of his other tales. 'Iphigenia, Mistress of Cimon,' and 'The Tale of Generva' are examples.

"Next, his characters. Here we have the strongest possible reason for attributing the story to Boccaccio. Boccaccio alone could so deplorably neglect his characters. Here the woman is 'honest' and 'beautiful'; the man is 'well-mannered' and has 'military ability.' And that is about all he tells us.

"As the tyro at the piano strums out his tune, using only his right hand while his left lies helpless in his lap, so Boccaccio told his stories. The play of character, the snappy dialogue, the photographic description—in a word, the chief merits of the best shorter fic-

tions—are nearly always absent qualities in his work. I am not here censuring the man: I am merely endeavoring to show that 'Federigo Alberighi and His Falcon' is easily attributable to its author, and that it is not, according to my way of thinking, a great story."

OTHER PRIZE WINNERS

William M. Arthur, Charlestown, Massachusetts; Anna B. Coulter, Austintown, Ohio; Herbert L. Davis, Fort Worden, Washington; J. D. Jeffries, Lennoxville, Quebec; Sinclair Hamilton, Boston, Massachusetts; J. A. Murphy, Magog, Quebec; Sara Potash, Roxbury, Massachusetts; William R. Van Meter, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Maud K. Waddock, St. Louis, Missouri; Cyril T. Webb, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

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Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1926.

State of New York, County of New York (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Ormond G. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is President of the Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publishers, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; editor, Kenneth P. Littauer, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; managing editors, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; business managers, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Ainslee's Magazine Company, Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street,

New York, N. Y.; a corporation composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: Clarence C. Verham, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, N. Y.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

ORMOND G. SMITH, President,
Of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers,
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of September, 1926. Francis S. Duff, Notary Public No. 173, New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1927.)

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Unconditionally & Perpetually Guaranteed

Give Lasting Beauty

Nothing else that you can select for Yuletide giving will confer such lasting benefits upon the fortunate recipient as a Conklin Endura, for no matter how or when any Conklin Endura fountain pen is broken or its usefulness impaired, it will be repaired or replaced free whenever all the broken parts are sent to us. For over three years this unconditional and perpetual guarantee of free service has protected the owner of a Conklin Endura pen, and experience has proved that the quality and workmanship in this super-pen of all time is indeed such as to justify even such an unlimited guarantee. There are Endura Pencils to match all Endura Pens. Try them at leading pen counters.

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Sapphire Blue,
\$3.50

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Sapphire Blue Set
exquisitely boxed,
\$12.00



The Christmas Favorite

"If you want to make your own Christmas a merrier one, buy a whole box of 24 delicious bars of **Baby Ruth**. Trim your tree with it, fill up the children's stockings, and keep the rest on the table for an all-day treat.

Sparkling eyes, happy faces

and thankful hearts will reward your thoughtfulness.

America's Favorite Candy will make every home merry on Christmas morn!

Buy **Baby Ruth** by the box for Christmas Gifts."

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President

CURTISS CANDY COMPANY
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5c

Who's Who in Health!

They know how to banish common ills,
how to gain glorious, vital health
through one simple food

NOT a "cure-all," not a medicine—Fleischmann's Yeast is simply a remarkable fresh food.

The millions of tiny active yeast plants in every cake invigorate the whole system. They aid digestion—clear the skin—banish the poisons of constipation. Where cathartics give only temporary relief, yeast strengthens the intestinal muscles and makes them healthy and active, daily releasing new stores of energy.

Eat two or three cakes regularly every day, one before each meal: on crackers, in fruit juices, water or milk—or just plain, in small pieces. For constipation dissolve one cake in hot water (not scalding) before meals and at bedtime. Dangerous habit-forming cathartics will gradually become unnecessary. All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days.

And let us send you a free copy of our latest booklet on Yeast for Health. Health Research Dept. Z-35, The Fleischmann Company, 701 Washington Street, New York.



"SKIN ERUPTIONS covered my body. I could not rest at night. Finally someone suggested Fleischmann's Yeast. I took three cakes a day and soon I was well. That was three years ago and I have not had any skin trouble since."

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"I HAD SICK HEADACHES brought on by indigestion. A doctor advised Fleischmann's Yeast. I have now been free from headaches for several months. Fleischmann's Yeast did for me what all other remedies failed to do."

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THIS FAMOUS FOOD tones up the entire system— aids digestion—clears the skin—banishes constipation.



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The "Mountie" isn't lonely any more

WHEN the supply ship steams south from the last outpost of northern civilization in September, not to return until the following July, loneliness will never again beset the lives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who patrol that vast, wild area.

Radio is now brightening the long winter nights with music, special programs, messages and greetings from their "home folks." And in the receiving sets of the "Mounties" is the best equipment obtainable. The batteries they use *must* be dependable. They *must* serve until new supplies are brought in a year later.

Ask Any Radio Engineer

BURGESS BATTERY COMPANY

GENERAL SALES OFFICE: CHICAGO

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Niagara Falls and Winnipeg



BURGESS RADIO BATTERIES



The Brand of
a Good Book

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The biggest and fastest selling line of cloth-covered books. Ask your druggist—your bookseller to show you any of these latest titles.

There's something doing all the while in a "CH" book. These books which have never before been published were written for men who love the sweep of the great West, the mysteries of big cities, the conquest of man over his environment.

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RONICKY DOONE

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RED MOUNTAIN, LIMITED

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79-89 SEVENTH AVE.
NEW YORK CITY

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HERE is the present with a past. It has proved its acceptability as a gift for everybody, from six to sixty, year after year. Eveready Flashlights are extremely good-looking—intensely useful—inexpensive.

This is the ideal combination for Christmas giving! An Eveready Flashlight!

Save wandering and wondering this year by deciding right now to give an Eveready Flashlight to everyone on your list. It will brighten their lives every day and night in the year. It will guard their steps in the dark and lighten the nightly chores.

To be sure of the newest and best flashlight features, insist upon getting genuine Evereadys. Only Eveready has the new, convenient ring-hanger for hanging up the flashlight when not in use—the greatest single flashlight improvement in years.

Genuine Evereadys also have the safety-lock switch which



prevents accidental lighting and consequent wasting of current; octagonal lens-ring, which prevents rolling when you lay the flashlight down; beveled, crystal-clear lens; durable, all-metal barrel, etc.

You cannot give *more* and spend *less*. You cannot choose a gift more universally welcome to men, women and children. Give Evereadys this Christmas to everyone on your list. You'll be glad you did . . . and so will they who receive them!

There's an Eveready Flashlight for every purpose and purse, and an Eveready dealer nearby.

Manufactured and guaranteed by
NATIONAL CARBON CO., Inc.
New York San Francisco
Canadian National Carbon Co., Limited
Toronto, Ontario

THE RING - HANGER

This is an exclusive Eveready feature. Hinged, metal ring in end-cap for hanging up flashlight when not in use. Ring snaps securely closed, out of the way, when flashlight is in action.

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—they last longer

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Not a trace of infection

Your dentist can prevent serious teeth decay and search out hidden poison pockets dangerous to the health. See him at least twice a year.

**Pyorrhea attacks
4 out of 5**

Four out of five past forty, and many younger, succumb to the assault of grim pyorrhea. Carelessness alone is to blame.

Resolve today to remove pyorrhea's menace by brushing teeth and gums regularly night and morning with Forhan's for the Gums.

Forhan's keeps pyorrhea away or checks its course if used regularly and used in time. It contains Forhan's Pyorrhea Liquid which dentists use to fight pyorrhea.

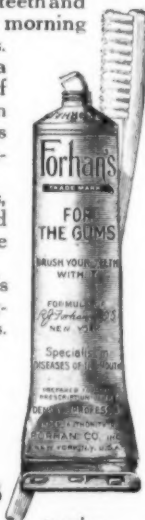
Forhan's firms the gums, keeps them pink and healthy and cleanses the teeth thoroughly.

Start today with Forhan's as a safeguard. At all drug-gists 35c and 60c in tubes.

Formula of R. J. Forhan, D. D. S.
Forhan Company, New York

**Forhan's
FOR THE GUMS**

More than a tooth paste—it checks pyorrhea.



**Here's
the Gift**

for every man on your
Christmas list



**Mennen for Men
Christmas Gift Box**
with the new Improved Lather Brush

An assortment of shaving delights for which any man will be genuinely grateful.

The Lather Brush for instance. A real lather builder—made of the finest and purest undyed hair and bristle. *Guaranteed.* Set in hard rubber. Sterilized. Sturdy, easy grip handle—stands where it's put.

It's easily the equal of any you can buy for \$4.00 to \$5.00. Nine men out of ten need it. Steal a glimpse at his old brush. How he'll appreciate this new one!

Then the tube of Mennen Shaving Cream. Probably it's his favorite anyway. Also Mennen Skin Balm, the great after-shaving preparation, and Mennen Talcum for Men, for topping off the perfect shave.

It's a real bargain...and remarkable value. At your favorite store. Get yours now, before the supply is exhausted.

Jim Henry
(Mennen Salesman)

\$
5
value
for
\$
2.50

CONTENTS

- 1 Mennen Lather Brush (value) \$4.00
- 1 Mennen Shaving Cream (special size)..... 25
- 1 Mennen Talcum for Men..... 25
- 1 Mennen Skin Balm..... 50

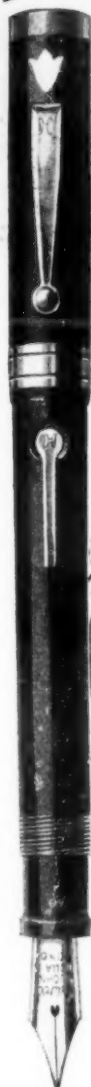
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Attractively Packaged

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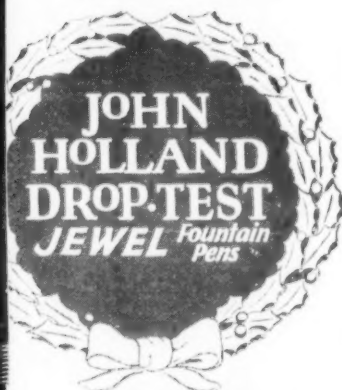
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of affection and good will. Any friend who does not already own a John Holland "Drop Test" Jewel fountain pen would appreciate one more than scores of other gifts you could select.

The smooth-writing nib of this famous, imperishable pen is not harmed in the least by dropping it, point down, on a hardwood floor. No other pen invites this test.



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In black or colors, as you prefer. Barrels and caps are indestructible. Other John Holland pens from \$2.75 to \$30.00. If your dealer cannot supply you, write us.

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INGERSOLL Wrist Watch

Recently reduced to . . . \$350
New model this year. Tonneau-shape; silvered metal dial. Wrist Radiolite, telltime in the dark, \$4.00



For Christmas an Ingersoll

When you give an Ingersoll watch you make a gift that is appreciated all out of proportion to its cost. For there's no gift like a watch, nothing used so much, consulted so often, carried so long. And Ingersoll Watches, made for over 30 years, have a reputation for dependability and enduring service that is worldwide and thoroughly deserved.

INGERSOLL WATCH CO., INC.
New York Chicago San Francisco



The New YANKEE

Recently reduced to
More closely cased, antique bow and crown, new dial and other new features of grace and beauty. Sturdy and dependable. \$150

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DIAMONDS

The Old Reliable Original Credit Jewelers
Largest in the World

LOFTIS BROS. & CO., 1215 Address Dept. 6222
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Genuine Diamonds Guaranteed - CASH or CREDIT
Give a Diamond for Christmas! Buy from Loftis, the Direct Importer, and be sure of highest quality and most value for your money. Our ring mountings are the latest creations in 14-k white gold, elaborately carved and pierced. Satisfaction guaranteed, or money back. Goods sent for your free examination on request.

CREDIT TERMS: Pay one-tenth down; balance weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly at your convenience. All goods delivered on first payment.

CHRISTMAS CATALOG FREE!
Big 132-page book, illustrating our Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Silverware, and gift articles for all occasions, sent absolutely free. Write today.

19-Jewel Adjusted Waltham No. 846-
14-k white gold filled; assorted patterns, \$42.50, \$4.25 down and \$1.00 a week.

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Guaranteed to Pass Inspection

HAMILTON NO. 993, 21 Jewels, adjusted to 6 positions, Gold-filled 20-year case, ELGIN'S LATEST RAYMOND, 21 Jewels, Adjustments, Runs 40 hours on winding, Gold-filled 20-year case, \$55
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\$100
\$25.00 a wk.

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\$100
\$25.00 a wk.

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\$25.00 a wk.

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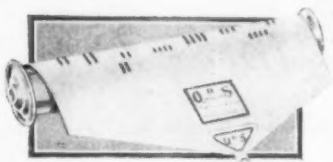
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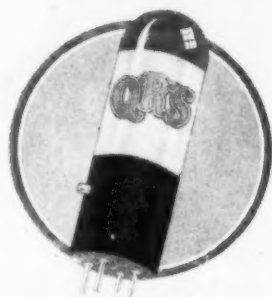
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